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Anne Oldmixon

THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D.D.

VOLUME X.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR,

CONTAINING

A PARAPHRASE ON THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

ST. PAUL TO TIMOTHY,

TITUS,
PHILEMON,
HEBREWS,
The EPISTLE of JAMES,
I. PETER,
II. PETER,

I. JOHN,
II. JOHN,
III. JOHN,
JUDE,
REVELATION.

Ει δε τις υπο τεθων μη ωασχη των λογων, υπο μονων αν των εν αὐθ δικαςηριων υπευθυνθειη.
SIMPLIC. in EPICTET. Proem.

With a Copious Index; also, an Index to the Greek Words, and a List of the Subscribers.

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THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TIMOTHY.

IT is uncertain where Timothy was when he received this *epistle.* Some have supposed he must have been at Ephesus; but their arguments in support of that opinion seem inconclusive (as Mr. Boyle has well observed.) And indeed it does not seem very easy to reconcile this supposition with the *apostle's* charge, chap. iv. 13,) to bring with him the *books and parchments* he had left at Troas; that city lying so far out of his way from Ephesus to Rome, especially as he had expressed a desire of seeing him as soon as possible. And if it should be pleaded, that the things he sent for might not *then* be at Troas, but at some other place that might lie in his way, it is sufficient to answer, that it would in that case, have been more to Paul's purpose, to have directed Timothy where to have found them, than to inform him where they were first left. To which may be added, that if Timothy had been at Ephesus, when this *epistle* was written, the *apostle* would hardly have said, "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus," (chap. iv. 12,) but rather, "Tychicus have I sent to *you.*"

That this *epistle* was written while Paul was under confinement at Rome, is universally agreed; but whether it was during his *first or second* imprisonment, has been matter of debate. Several learned writers, among whom are Hammond, Lightfoot, and Cave, have maintained the *former* opinion; while others have argued in favour of the *latter*, from chap i. 18. where Paul, speaking of Onesiphorus, says, *he sought him diligently at Rome;* which they apprehend implies, that the *apostle* was kept under so close a confinement at this time, that few knew where he was to be found; whereas in that imprisonment, of which Luke gives an account in the conclusion of his history, we are told, *He dwelt in a hired house, receiving all that came to him,* (Acts xxviii. 30.)

But the strongest argument in support of this opinion is drawn from chap. iv. 6 ; *I am now just ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* From whence it has been inferred, that Paul, when he wrote this, was in immediate expectation of death, in consequence of Nero's menaces, or of some express revelation from Christ ; (which some have thought Peter also had a little before his martyrdom, 2 Pet. i. 14.) Yet the directions he afterwards gives plainly shew he had some expectations of living a while longer. Else it is difficult to say why he should so much urge Timothy to *give diligence to come to him*, ver. 21, or press his care of the *cloak*, *books*, *and parchments*, mentioned ver. 13. Though, after all, these words must, I think, express an apprehension that his life and ministry were drawing towards a close ; which is yet farther confirmed by observing, that whereas in his former imprisonment the *apostle* had often expressed his persuasion of being released and seeing his Christian friends again, he gives no hint in this *epistle* of any such expectation, but seems to intimate the contrary, ver. 18. by expressing his confidence, not that he should be again rescued from his enemy as he had been upon making his *first* apology, but that God would *deliver him from every evil work*, and *preserve him to his heavenly kingdom*.—Upon the whole, therefore, I conclude that this *epistle* was written some time towards the close of Paul's *second* imprisonment, and consequently about the year of our Lord 66 or 67 ; and in the 13th of the emperor Nero. (See *Family Expositor*, Vol. VIII. sect. 60, *note*[g], p. 305.)

The *apostle* seems to have intended in this *epistle* to prepare Timothy for those sufferings to which he foresaw he would be exposed ; to forewarn him of the fatal apostacy and declension that was beginning to appear in the church ; and at the same time to animate him, from his own example and the great motives of Christianity, to the most vigorous and resolute discharge of every part of the ministerial office.

In pursuance of this general design, the *apostle*, after his usual salutation, begins with assuring Timothy of his most affectionate remembrance, and his earnest desire to see him, expressing his satisfaction in those marks of sincere faith which appeared in him as well as in his pious ancestors. He then takes occasion, from his own suffering, to excite him to a becoming fortitude and resolution in the Christian cause ; and represents in a strong light the excellence of that gospel which he was appointed to preach, and on which he placed an entire dependence, chap. i. 1—12. The *apostle*, being firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines which he had so often inculcated upon his beloved pupil, exhorts him strenuously to retain them in the midst of all discouragements and opposition, and to go through the duties of his ministerial work with the utmost diligence and constancy, in dependence on the grace of God : mentioning at the same time the treachery of several Asiatics, and acknowledging with the warmest gratitude the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus, ver. 15, 16. Chap. ii. 1—7. And, in order yet more effectually to fortify

Timothy

Timothy against the difficulties he might be called to encounter, he lays open the motives and hopes by which he himself was supported under the sufferings he bore in defence of the gospel; assuring him, that those who *suffered* with Christ should also be *glorified* with him. To this he adds some directions in relation to his ministry; advising him in particular to avoid and discourage all those empty harangues and idle controversies which only served to confound the mind, and by which some had been seduced from the purity of the Christian faith, ver. 8—18. The *apostle* then takes occasion, from a general view of the great design and tendency of the gospel, to urge the necessity of holiness in all Christians, and especially in ministers; and recommends to the latter the utmost gentleness and meekness in their attempts to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen, ver. 19, *to the end.*—And, to make him more sensible of the importance of exerting himself in order to maintain the purity and honour of religion, he assures him that a great declension and apostacy was to prevail in the Christian world; and that false teachers were rising up in it, by whose wicked artifices many weak persons were deceived and led astray; reminding him at the same time of that patience and fortitude which he had seen him discover amidst the severest persecutions; chap. iii. 1—13. To guard Timothy against these seducers, and to preserve the church from their fatal influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures as of the utmost importance to all the purposes of Christian edification; and charges him in a solemn manner to use the utmost diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; declaring at the same time, for his encouragement, the satisfaction with which he reflected on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth, ver. 14. Chap. iv. 1—8. The *apostle* concludes this *epistle* with requesting Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, in order to assist and comfort him under the unworthy treatment he had met with from some of his Christian brethren; giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and, having expressed his cheerful confidence that he should be safely conducted to the presence of his Lord, he adds some particular salutations, and closes with his usual benediction, ver. 9, *to the end of the epistle.*

Whoever reads over this *epistle* with that attention it deserves, and considers the circumstance in which it was written, will be sensible that it affords a very strong argument in favour of Christianity.—The *apostle* had been for some time under close confinement at Rome, at the mercy of a cruel and capricious tyrant. He had seen himself deserted by his friends in his greatest extremity; and had nothing before him but the certain prospect of being called to suffer death in the same cause to which he had devoted his life.—In this situation how does he behave? Does he seem to look back with concern on his past conduct, or to regret the sacrifice he had made of all his worldly interests? Can we discover any thing that

that betrays a secret consciousness of guilt, or even a suspicion of the *weakness* of his cause? Nay, does he drop a single expression that can be interpreted as a mark of fear, or discomposure of mind, in the apprehension of those gloomy scenes that lay before him?—Surely if he had been an impostor, or had entertained the least doubt of the doctrines he taught, something of this kind must have escaped him when writing to so intimate a friend, with whom he could intrust all the secrets of his breast.—On the contrary, upon the most calm and deliberate survey, he expresses an entire satisfaction in reflecting on the part he had acted; and earnestly recommends it to his beloved pupil to follow his example in maintaining the glorious cause, even at the hazard of his life. He appears throughout his *epistle* to have felt a strong inward conviction of the truth of those principles he had embraced, and glories in the sufferings he endured in support of them; triumphing in the full assurance of being approved by his great Master, and of receiving at his hands a crown of distinguished lustre. A behaviour like this, in one who had so considerable a share in establishing the Christian religion, and expected in a short time to seal his testimony to it with his blood, must be allowed a strong confirmation of the truth of those facts on which our faith depends. It is at least a convincing proof that the *apostle* was himself *sincere* in what he professed to believe: and when the several circumstances of his history are considered and impartially weighed, it will appear as evident that he could not possibly be *deceived*, and consequently that his testimony is to be admitted in its full force.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TIMOTHY.

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SECT. I.

The Apostle begins his epistle, after proper salutations, with expressions of his affection to Timothy, and general acknowledgments of his joy in, and dependence upon, the grace of that gospel which he was employed to preach. 2 Tim. I. 1—12.

2 TIM. I. 1.

PAUL an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus.

2 To Timothy *my* dearly beloved son: grace, mercy, *and* peace

2 TIMOTHY I. 1. SECT. I.

I *PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God* (whose eternal counsels, with reference to me, were manifested in that wonderful manner in which I was set apart for the service of the gospel, *agreeably to the promise of* eternal *life*, which is given us *in Christ Jesus*, and by which I am animated in all my labours and sufferings), Send this second epistle *to Timothy*, 2 *my beloved son*; whose humble and faithful services in the gospel I have so long proved, and whom I love with the affection of a father. Nor can I express this affection better than by wishing, 2 Tim. I. 1.

SECT. i.

ing, as I most sincerely do, that *grace, mercy,* and *peace,* may attend thee, *from God, the* gracious and merciful *Father* of all true believers, *and from Christ Jesus,* his Son and *our Lord,* who is also our Peace.

2 Tim. I. 2.

peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 *I give thanks unto* this blessed *God, whom I serve, after* the example of [*my*] pious *progenitors, with a pure conscience, that* through his goodness, laying the case upon my heart, *I am incessantly mindful of thee in my prayers night and day,* so that I scarce ever rise up in the morning, or lie down in the evening, without allowing thee a share in my devout remembrance;

3 I thank God whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;

4 *Desiring earnestly to see thee, as I am mindful of thy tears,* which flowed so plentifully at our last separation, *that I might be filled with joy,* in an interview with so dear and amiable a friend.

4 Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy:

5 And indeed thou hast, as it were, an hereditary title to my regard, *as I* also *keep in remembrance the undissembled faith which is in thee,* and *which first dwelt in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice,* who believed in Christ before thee, and have been happily instrumental in communicating to thy heart those good impressions which they felt on their own; *and I am persuaded that* [*it is*] *in thee too,* and that thou still retainest it in the midst of all opposition:

5 When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

6 *For which cause I* am the more encouraged to *remind thee of stirring up the gift of God*[a], *which is in thee by the imposition of my hands*[b]; whereby those miraculous communications of the Spirit were imparted to thee, which it will be thy duty to cherish, by frequently engaging in those devotional exercises and active services for which they are intended to qualify thee.

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.

7 Exert thyself therefore with cheerfulness and boldness, without dreading any opposition that may arise; *for God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice* and fear, *but of courage, and of love, and of wisdom*[c]; and if we conduct ourselves

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

a *Stirring up the gift.*] Αναζωπυρειν. The metaphor is plainly borrowed from *stirring up fire* when it is almost extinct; and some have imagined it might refer to that part of the priest's office which consisted in trimming the *lamps* in the temple, and supplying them with oil in order to keep them continually burning (see *Raphel. Polyb. in loc.*); while others have thought it alludes to the form of flames in which the Spirit descended. Acts ii. 3. See 1 Thess. v. 19, and note there. Compare Gen. xlv. 27. *Septuag.*

b *Imposition of my hands.*] See the *note* on 1 Tim. iv. 14.

c *God hath not given us,* &c.] Perhaps Paul added this under an apprehension, that the *tender* spirit of Timothy might have been something terrified by the prospect of *persecution.*

d *Given*

selves prudently, under the influences of a spirit of universal love, we may hope that his Spirit will work mightily in us, to fit us for those services which his Providence may point out. SECT. I. 2 Tim. I. 7.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God;

Be not therefore ashamed of that sacred truth, 8 which is *the testimony of our Lord*, taught by his mouth, confirmed by his death and resurrection, and the descent of his Spirit; *nor of me*, who am now *his prisoner; but* resolutely own thy regard to me, and *take thy share in the afflictions* which may lie in thy way, while bearing a courageous testimony to the truth *of the gospel, according to the* evidence derived to it from the miraculous *power of God;*

9 Who hath saved us and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

Who hath saved 9 *us* from that ruin into which the world hath fallen by its fatal apostacy, *and* hath *called* [*us*] out from the rest of mankind *by an holy calling, not according to* any distinguished merit of *our* own *works, but according to his own purpose, and* those rich overflowings of *grace given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages* [d], as he was appointed, in the everlasting and immutable counsels of God, to be a Redeemer and a Saviour unto us.

10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel:

But this long concealed grace 10 *is now made manifest by the* illustrious *appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who* by what he has done and suffered in human flesh for the salvation of his faithful servants, *hath* in effect *abolished death*, has deposed it from its tyrannical empire, *and thrown a light on* the important doctrine of *life and immortality by the gospel* [e]; which

d *Given to us in Christ Jesus from eternal ages.*] I see no reason for rendering it, as Dr. Whitby would do, *according to his purpose before all ages, and the grace given us in Christ Jesus.* The grace might be said to be given us in Christ, as the Father stipulated with him, through his hand, as well as for his sake, to give us that grace which we do actually receive.

e *Thrown a light upon life and immortality.*] *Life and immortality* is put by a usual Hebraism for *immortal life*, as Archbishop Tillotson well observes, Vol. III. p. 112.) in his discourse on these words; in which he has shewn, how uncertain the heathens were as to the doctrines of a future state of retribution, and the comparative obscurity of that *light* in which it was placed under the Old Testament. The former article is much illustrated by Dr. Whitby's learned and excellent note. But what Mr. Warburton has written upon this subject, in his *Divine Legation*, Vol. I. and what is said upon it, in the last edition of the *critical enquiry into the opinions of the ancient philosophers*, has done abundantly more than any thing else to vindicate the propriety of this expression; and I must refer to these learned and ingenious *writers* for the most satisfactory commentary on these words of the apostle.—But the learned and pious Dr. *Hodges* (who, so far as I can judge, has given us a greater variety of new and plausible interpretations of scripture than any other divine in the *Hutchinsonian* scheme) contends, that the word αφθαρσιαν ought to be rendered *incorruption*, and that Christ himself is to be understood both *by life and incorruption*; so that the text must refer to his throwing light on Psal. xvi. 10, 11, and on other scriptures, where it was foretold that the Messiah should be the *light of the world*, and bestow *incorruptible life* upon others

SECT. i.

which gives us a more express assurance and more lively view of it than any former dispensation had ever done, or could possibly do.

2 Tim. 1. 11. This is that important message of God to men, for the proclamation and confirmation *of which I was appointed an herald and apostle, and* particularly had it in my charge, while others were more immediately sent to the circumcision, to

12 be myself *a teacher of the Gentiles: For which cause I also suffer these* hard *things*, which press me in this state of confinement; *but*, though my condition may seem infamous, *I am not ashamed* of these bonds, or any of the reproaches and insults with which they are attended: *for I know to whom I have trusted* all my most important concerns, *and am* fully *persuaded that he is* well *able to keep that* precious immortal soul *which I have deposited with him*, even *unto that* great and important *day* when the promised salvation shall be completed[f].

11 Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 8, 9 WHO, that attentively considers the *holy calling* with which *we are called, according to the grace given us in Christ Jesus*, can endure the thought of being *ashamed of Christ's gospel, or any of his servants*, to whatever difficulties they may be exposed, with whatever infamy they may be loaded? For ever adored be

10 that Prince of life, who hath *deposed death*, from his throne; who hath *enlightened*, by rays reflected from his own beautiful and resplendent countenance, the regions *of the invisible world*, over

12 which so dark a veil had before been spread? Let our eyes be fixed more and more on this illustrious Object, and confiding in *the*

others, by raising himself from the grave before he was corrupted there. But if any should still think this expression refers to the *future state*, to which Dr. *Hodges* apprehends it has no regard, he would have him consider it as applicable to the Gentiles only; on which account he supposes the apostle presently after speaks of his being *appointed as their teacher*, ver. 11. This violent interpretation (for such on the whole it appears to me,) is intended to obviate the objection which arises from this text, against several new *criticisms*, by which this ingenious writer would find references to a *future state* and the *resurrection*, in passages of the Old Testament, in which they were never before thought of. See Dr. *Hodges's Elihu*, p. 251, 252.

f *That which I have deposited with him.*] Philo and Josephus have many passages (several of them collected by Dr. Whitby in his note on this text,) in which both the *soul* and the *law* are in different views called παραθηκη, *the depositum of God.* The soul, as it is said, is to be returned into the hands of God, and committed to his care at death, and this they tell us, may be done more cheerfully, in proportion to the degree in which care has been taken to maintain the honour of his *law* with due fidelity. There is to be sure a similarity of sentiment with regard to the gospel, but Paul might have used this expresson, without borrowing the hint from any Jewish writer whatever.

the power and grace of Christ, let us all immediately and daily *commit* to him that invaluable jewel of an *immortal soul*, which God hath given us. We may surely survey it with a mixture of delight and terror, till we have thus provided for its safety; and then may that terror be allowed to disappear, and give place to a rational delight, and we may justly *congratulate* ourselves while we *adore* our Saviour. SECT. i.

Let the proclamation of this *gospel* be most welcome to us, and let us call up all the strength and vigour of our souls to assert and advance it; *for God hath given us the Spirit, not of fear, but of courage, sobriety, and charity.* 7 Whatever gifts we have received, let us *stir them up* to their proper use, and let one generation of *Christians* deliver down to another, a sense of the excellency of their holy religion. 6 Pious women may take encouragement from the success of *Lois and Eunice on Timothy*, who proved so excellent and useful a minister; as perhaps some of the worthiest and most valuable ministers the church of *Christ* has ever been able to boast of, have had reason to bless God for those early impressions which were made upon their mind by the religious instructions of persons in the same relations. 5

To conclude, let us learn, by the repeated example of the apostle, to be earnest in *prayer* for our Christian friends; and if we find our hearts excited to *remember them in our prayers day and night*, let us with him, return *our thanks to God*, that he puts such benevolent affections into our hearts; for every good disposition that springs up there is implanted and cherished by him. 3

SECT. II.

The Apostle exhorts Timothy strenuously to retain the gospel in the midst of all discouragements and oppositions, and go through the duties of his ministerial office, in dependence upon the grace of God; mentioning the treachery of several Asiatics, and the extraordinary fidelity and zeal of Onesiphorus. 2 Tim. I. 13—Chap. II. 7.

2 Tim. I. 13. HOLD fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of

2 Timothy I. 13.

ENCOURAGED by that confidence which I have been expressing in the power and fidelity of my Lord, to whom I have entrusted the care of my immortal interests and concerns, be thou, O Timothy, engaged resolutely to *retain*, SECT. ii. 2 Tim. I. 13.

SECT. ii. and exactly to adhere to *the form of sound words*[a] that system of divine and everlasting truths
2 Tim. I. 13. *which thou hast heard of me;* keep it, not merely *in* thy memory, but in thine heart, with cordial *faith, and* that sincere, fervent *love, which is* the great badge of our being *in Christ Jesus*, and which will finally secure our being owned by him as his true disciples. And as thou
14 desirest to have the same cheerful confidence, let it be thy care to *keep that good thing which is deposited with thee*[b], even the gospel of Christ lodged in thine hands: assert its honours, *by the* aid of the *Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us*, and which will, I trust, enable thee to act with that integrity and zeal which so arduous and important a service requires.

of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

14 That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.

15 *Thou knowest this, that all those of Asia*[c], who are at Rome, and were known to me by a profession of Christianity, *are turned from me*, and have proved treacherous friends, after all their forward pretences; *of which number are Phygellus and Hermogenes*[d]; whom it is with great concern that I am obliged particularly to point
16 out on such an occasion. But it is with proportionable pleasure that I mention another person, of a very different character, whose affection and zeal was illustrated by their baseness and disingenuity. *May the Lord grant* his *mercy* to his family! I mean *to the household of Onesiphorus; for he hath often refreshed me*, both by his visits and liberalities, *and hath not been ashamed of my chain*, Eph. vi. 20; but has rather esteemed it his honour to own me, while I was under disgrace and persecution in so good a cause.
17 *But being* here *in Rome, he sought me out* so much the *more diligently* on that very account, *and* when

15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

16 The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

17 But when he was in Rome, he sought me

a *Form of sound words.*] Archbishop *Tillotson* explains this, of that profession of faith which was made by Christians at their baptism, (*Works* Vol. II. p. 38.) and the author of *Miscellanea Sacra* observes, that it is not said that Timothy received this form by immediate inspiration, but heard it of Paul, as according to him, *the word of wisdom*, was given only to the *apostles*. Chap. ii. 2; iii. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 15.

b *That good thing which is deposited.*] See the *note* on ver. 12.

c *Those in Asia*, &c.] The Asiatics were infamous for their cowardice and effeminacy. Paul probably alludes to their behaviour at Rome, (chapter iv. 16,) of which Timothy might have been informed by travellers. But Dr. Whitby refers this to those of Ephesus who had deserted the apostle, giving ear, as he supposes, to the seduction of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, by whom he had been represented as a despiser of the Mosaic law. Nevertheless, I prefer the former interpretation, as evidently more natural.

d *Phygellus and Hermogenes.*] Probably he mentions these two persons as known to Timothy, or as having *distinguished* themselves by their profession, so that there was particular reason to expect a different conduct from them.

e *Commit*

me out very diligently, and found *me*.

18 The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day. And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.

when he had *found* [*me*] took every opportunity of expressing his unfeigned love and veneration for a servant and apostle of Christ in such a circumstance. *The Lord grant unto him that*, after having enjoyed all the blessings of a long and useful life, *he may find mercy of the Lord in that* great *day*, to which our eyes and hopes, as Christians, are continually directed. *And on how many occasions he ministered* [*to me*] *in Ephesus, thou very well knowest*, as thou wert an eye-witness to it, while we were together there.

SECT. ii.

2 Tim. I. 18.

II. 1. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Thou therefore, *my* dearly beloved *son* Timothy, animated by such an example of fidelity and courage, *be strong*, *in* humble and continual dependence upon *the grace which is in Christ Jesus*, and resolve never to be ashamed of any of his faithful servants under disgrace and difficulties, while adhering to his cause. *And the things which thou hast heard from me*, and which I have solemnly testified again and again, *before many witnesses*, in one place and another, *these commit thou* with all diligence and care *to faithful men*[e], *who may be able also to teach others*; that so there may be, throughout all ages, a succession of such, who shall deliver them down from one to another, even till the end of time, according to God's gracious purposes in revealing them to us. And especially do *thou* see to it thyself, that thine own temper and conduct be such as may engage them to fidelity in bearing their testimony. *Therefore*, as thy lot is cast in a time when we are called to suffer so many severe things for the truth, prepare thyself steadily and resolutely to *endure afflictions* and hardships, *as* it becomes *a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, and one whom he hath honoured with a distinguished rank in his army, that thou mayest marshal and lead on others. And, to pursue the metaphor, remember, that *no one who goes out to war entangles himself with secular affairs*, but relinquishes every other calling and employment, *that he may please him under whom he is inlisted*, and be ready to receive and execute his commands. Accordingly keep thyself as much as

II. 1

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

3

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

4

e *Commit to faithful men.*] This is quoted by many, as an argument that the *people* were not left to chuse their own ministers. But if they did chuse them, or propose them to Timothy, it might yet be his appropriate office to *admit* them to the ministry, and solemnly to *commit* the gospel to them. Compare the note on Tit. i. 5.

f *Must*

SECT. ii.

as possible disengaged from worldly business, and from every thing which might tend to take off thy thoughts from thy great work, and render thee less active in thy sacred warfare. *And* thou *also* knowest, that *if any one wrestles*, or contends in any other of those games for which Greece is so celebrated, if he do gain an advantage over his antagonist, *he is not crowned, unless he wrestle*, or perform any other athletic exercise, *according to the law* of the respective contention. So let us take care to learn the rules which Christ has laid down to direct us in our attempts, and act according to them.

2 Tim. II. 5.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 And be not impatient, though the expected and promised reward should be long delayed; for thou well knowest that *the husbandman must first labour*, and wait while the harvest is growing, through succeeding weeks and months, [*and then*] *partake of the fruits* produced by his toils [f].

6 The husbandman that laboureth, must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 *Consider the things which I say* as matters of high importance, in which thou art intimately concerned; *and may the Lord give thee* a good *understanding in all things*, and enable thee to act in a manner suitable to the instructions thou hast received.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. ii. 1.

LET us all be exhorted to be *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, and, in humble dependence upon it, let us go forth cheerfully to our work and warfare as *Christians*. This is a strength so great, and communicated with so rich a freedom, that the Christian *minister*, under his peculiar difficulties, will find it *adequate* to them all. Let such particularly apply to themselves the exhortations and consolations which are here given or

13 suggested Let them strenuously *retain the form of sound words*, which the inspired apostles have delivered, *with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*. To this *orthodoxy of principle*, which a due regard to this great and only standard will teach them, let

14 them add *orthodoxy of temper*. And, as they desire that *Christ may keep what they* profess to *have deposited with him*, let *them* faithfully *keep what he has lodged in their hands*. And may the *Holy*

f *Must first labour.*] It was entirely to the *apostle's* purpose to remind Timothy that the *labour* of the *husbandman* must *precede* the *harvest*; but whether he was to receive these fruits *first* was not the point in question. We must therefore acquiesce in this *transposition*, and the like is necessary in several other places. See Heb. viii. 4, in the *original*.

a *Remember*

Holy Spirit dwell in them, to make them faithful in all, and direct them in their efforts to defend the gospel, to spread its influence on the hearts of men, and transmit it from one generation to another; *lodging it with faithful men, who may teach others*, when their teachers and fathers in *Christ* shall rest from their labours. Such a succession may God continue in his churches; and may he prosper the work of those who are employed in humble and faithful attempts to promote so good a cause, by forming for this important charge those who, like *Timothy*, have early *known the scripture*, and felt its power on their hearts. SECT. II. Chap. ii. 2.

Let such as are setting out in this holy *warfare* remember the caution which the apostle gives. May they not unnecessarily *encumber themselves with secular cares*, which would render them 4 less fit *to please* the great *General* under whose *banner* they are *inlisted*. Let them *strive lawfully*, if they hope for the *crown* and *cultivating* the ground with diligence, let them wait with patience, if they desire at length to *reap* that blessed *harvest*. Nor let that general *apostacy* from the power of religion, which is the shame of the present day, deter them; but rather let it whet their pious zeal to own, with more strenuous attachment, the cause of *Christ* and of his faithful servants. And when they have done all, may they ever retain an humble sense of their dependence on the Divine *mercy:* and *the Lord grant to us* all, ministers and people, *that we may find it in that* great *day!*

SECT. III.

Paul further animates Timothy to fidelity, by laying open the motives and hopes which supported him under the difficulties he bore in the defence of the gospel; interspersing several addresses relating to that purity, prudence, and meekness, with which he should endeavour to conduct himself in the ministry. 2 Tim. II. 8—18.

2 Tim. II. 8.
REMEMBER that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead accord-

2 Timothy II. 8.

TO animate thee, O Timothy, to all the labours and all the sufferings of the Christian and ministerial life, *remember Jesus Christ*, the promised Messiah *of the seed of David*, the great Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, *who*, after having spent and laid down his life in the prosecution of his great work, *was raised from the dead*[a], and at length exalted to the right hand SECT. III. 2 Tim. II. 8.

a *Remember Christ who was raised from the dead.*] Our translators render it, *Remember that he was raised:* as if he had said, Adhere to this as the great foundation

SECT. iii.

hand of God, there to receive the reward of all his labours and sufferings, *according to* the tenor of *my gospel*, which, as thou well knowest, I every where preach and attest. *In* the service of *which*[b] *I suffer evil, [even] to bonds;* the chief magistrates of my country sentencing me to confinement, after the many insults which have been offered me by the dregs of the people, *as* if I were *a malefactor* worthy of some heavy punishment: *but* my great comfort is, that *the word of God is not bound.* I rejoice, that many of my brethren are at liberty to preach it publicly, and am thankful for every opportunity of bearing my testimony to so good a cause, in such a private manner as my present circumstances may admit; well knowing, that God can bless even these limited attempts, to what degree he shall in his infinite wisdom see fit. (Compare Phil. i. 12.) *On this account, I* cheerfully *endure all* these *things*, and whatever else Providence may appoint, *for the sake of the elect; that* the gracious purposes of God for their happiness may be effected, and *they may obtain* that complete *salvation which is in Christ Jesus*, and which shall be attended *with eternal*, as well as illustrious and exalted, *glory.*

2 Tim. II. 9.

according to my gospel.

9 Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil-doer, *even* unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.

10

10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

11 [*It is*] *a faithful word*[c] which I have often insisted upon, and it shall undoubtedly be verified; *that if we* have the resolution to *die with him*, even with that blessed Saviour, according to the obligation of our baptismal vow, *we shall also live with him*, in that everlasting happiness which he hath prepared for all his people. *If we* patiently *endure* our part in his afflictions, *we shall also* share his triumph, and *reign with him* in his celestial kingdom. But, on the other hand, *if we* are intimidated with these transitory evils, so as to desert his cause, and *deny* [*him*] before

11

11 *It is* a faithful saying, For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him:*

12

12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him:*

tion of the gospel. But though this be undoubtedly true, the *apostle's* thought seems rather more lively: remember *Him* who was thus raised from the dead, and that will be instead of a thousand arguments to bear thee through all thy difficulties.

b *In* the service of *which.*] Dr. Whitby has shewn, in his *note* on this clause, that εν ω sometimes signifies *in which cause*, or *for the sake of which.*

c *It is a faithful word.*] Some refer this to the concluding *clause* of the former verse; but it seems much more reasonable to connect it with what follows, as, generally speaking, this *phrase* is *introductory* to the weighty sentence it is intended to confirm. See 1 Tim. i. 15; iv. 8, 9. Though Tit. iii. 8. seems an exception. Dr. *Tillotson* thinks this was a *celebrated saying* among Christians, which was either derived by tradition from Christ or some of the *apostles*, and it had so powerful a tendency to keep them steady to their religion, that it is no wonder it was in frequent use. *Tillot.* Vol. II. p. 175, 176.

d *If*

him: if we deny *him*, he will also deny us:

13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

before men, *he will also*, as he hath expressly threatened, *deny us* in the great day, before his Father and his holy angels. *If we are unfaithful*[d], and false to our engagements, *he abideth faithful*, and will steadily adhere to those rules of judgment and distribution which he hath so solemnly laid down in his word (compare Mat. x. 33): for we may be sure *he cannot deny himself*, by frustrating his own public declaration. It becomes us therefore to weigh the tenor of them with all seriousness, and humbly to acquiesce in his terms, since it is impossible he should be brought to change them in favour of ours.

SECT. iii.

2 Tim. II. 13.

14 Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words, to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers.

Remind [*them*] *of these things*, as thou art engaged to sacrifice every other view to the great prospect of approving thy fidelity to such a Master. And for this purpose, *testify*, as *before the Lord*, and as in his presence[e], to those over whom thou art called to preside, *that men do not contend* and quarrel *about words*, an evil to [*which*] they are so obnoxious: for such a contention [*is*] *altogether unprofitable*, [*and even tends*] *to the subversion of the hearers*, taking off their attention from true religion, and filling their minds with pride and passion, and numberless other disorders and vices. 14

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Diligently endeavour, whenever thou comest *to present thyself before God*, in any of the duties of thine office, that, whatever men may judge of thee and thy services, thou mayest be *approved* by him as *a workman who hath no cause to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*[f], distributing 15

d *If we are unfaithful.*] So I think ει απιστουμεν should be rendered, as it stands opposed to πιστος, and so the *words* will farther imply, that whatever we lose by our unfaithfulness, in whatever degree it appears, it is no argument of any unfaithfulness *in him*; as his promises are made to *faithful* servants, and fair warning is given to persons of a different character.

e *Testify* as *before the Lord*, and as in his presence.] There is a most *awful solemnity* in this charge which plainly shews the great folly and mischief of striving about *little controversies*; and I pray God to affect the heart of his *ministers* with a deepersense of this, before the interests of vital religion among us be utterly undone by our severe contentions; or, as the excellent Archbishop Leighton expresses it in his lively manner, "What we profess to hold so *sacred*, be itself torn in pieces, while we are struggling about its *fringes*."

f *Rightly dividing the word of truth.*] Ορθοτομουντα τον λογον της αληθειας. Some think here is an allusion to what the *Jewish priest* or *Levite* did in dissecting the victim, and separating the parts in a proper manner; as some were to be laid on God's altar, and others to be given to those who were to share in the sacrifice. Others think it refers to guiding a *plough* aright, in order to divide the clods in the most proper and effectual manner, and make straight furrows. But, perhaps, the *metaphor* may be taken from the distribution made by a *steward*, in delivering out to each person under his care such things as his office and their necessities required.

g *Asserting*

SECT. iii.

tributing with prudence, as well as fidelity, to each his proper share. *But avoid*, and stand at a distance from, those *profane and empty declamations*, with which some who affect to be thought of importance in the Christian church are ready to amuse themselves: *for* though the evil of some of them may not immediately appear, and they may seem trifling rather than mischievous, *they will* at length *advance unto more impiety;* and when Satan has prevailed upon men once to quit the right way, he will be continually gaining greater advantages over them. *And their discourse will eat like a gangrene*, spreading itself farther and farther, till the whole body is infected, and even destroyed by it. Such teachers there are now in the church; *of which* [*number*] in particular *are Hymeneus and Philetus, Who have erred with respect to the truth*, so as to be wide of the mark. For they have, by their allegorical interpretations, explained away one of the most fundamental doctrines of our religion, *asserting that the resurrection*, of which it so largely speaks, consists only in a conversion from vice to virtue, and consequently *is already past*[g], with regard to all true Christians; *and* so they *subvert the faith of some*, who are less established in the doctrines of the gospel, and endanger their salvation. It will therefore become thee, amidst all the candour which I have so often inculcated, to guard against such tenets, and the authors of them.

2 Tim. II. 16.

16 But shun profane and vain bablings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus:

18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is not perhaps a *single* precept in the whole sacred volume, which would be more extensively useful to ministers, or to private Christians, than this of the *apostle*, taken in all its extent. *Remember Jesus Christ.* Many a sweet memorial hath he left us of himself. Often, very often, have we been called solemnly

Ver. 8

g *Asserting that the resurrection is past.*] Vice, as my learned friend Mr. *Warburton* with great propriety observes, in reference to the *text*, was in the *philosophical* schools called *death*. And, upon the same principle, a recovery to a virtuous course and temper might be called a kind of *resurrection* from the dead. But nothing can be more evident than that this was by no means the *resurrection* which Christianity taught. Yet, as there is nothing too absurd for some who pride themselves in their philosophy to believe, this foolish refinement found its followers among some pretended Christians of this stamp. *Warb. Div. Leg.* Vol. I. p. 435.

lemnly to survey them, and yet how ready are we to forget him, and by a natural consequence to forget ourselves, our duty and interest on the one hand, and our danger on the other! "Blessed *Jesus!* may we daily and hourly remember thee! that thou hast *died*, that thou art *raised from the dead*, and that thou art ever near thy people, to protect, to comfort, and to bless them. If, for thy cause, we should be called to *suffer evil, as evil doers*, whether in our persons, or reputations, may we not be discouraged, but rather *rejoice* in the honour thou doest us in appointing for us such a conformity to thyself! The enemies of thy *gospel* may indeed oppose it, they may *bind* its most faithful preachers, but their opposition, their persecution, is *vain*." *The word of God is not bound;* and Divine grace, operating by it, will sooner or later give it the intended, the promised triumph; that his *elect may obtain salvation by Jesus Christ*, and may not only escape the condemnation and ruin of the impenitent world, but may finally be crowned *with eternal glory.*

SECT. iii.

Ver. 9, 10

May we ever be mindful of this *faithful word*, that *if we suffer with Christ we shall reign with him* too; and may we *endure* the greatest hardships to which we can be called out, as considering that our *sufferings* are *momentary*, but our *reign* will be *eternal.* Never may we, for any allurement or terror, *deny him*, as we would not finally be *denied* by him; when no other honour will remain but that which he confers, no other happiness but that which he bestows.

11, 12, 13

In the mean time, as we desire the prosperity of his kingdom, let us earnestly pray that he will raise up to his church a multitude of faithful *ministers*, who may govern themselves by these truly *apostolical canons;* ministers who may not *contend about words* in a manner *unprofitable* and vain, who may not *amuse* their hearers with empty *harangues about insignificant curiosities* or perplexing *subtilties;* but may, in the integrity of their hearts, endeavour to *approve themselves to God, as workmen who need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* And may divine grace preserve the *church* from those *seducing teachers*, whose doctrine, like a secret *gangrene*, might spread itself to the destruction of the body, so that *the faith* of many might be *overthrown.*

14

15

17, 18

SECT. IV.

The Apostle urges the necessity of holiness in all Christians, but especially in ministers; and of meekness in their endeavours to recover sinners from the miserable condition into which they were fallen. 2 Tim. II. 19, *to the end.*

SECT. iv.

2 Tim. II. 19.

2 TIMOTHY II. 19.

IN order to excite thee, O Timothy, to contend earnestly for the great doctrines of the gospel, I have taken notice of the manner in which some have revolted from them. And it is matter of mournful reflection, that there should be such instances of apostacy in this early age of the church. *Nevertheless*, we recollect with pleasure that, whatever defections there may be in particular persons, *the* great *foundation* Stone, which the mercy and faithfulness *of God* has laid for the support and comfort of his people, *standeth firm* and stedfast, *having*, as it were, *this* double seal or *inscription*[a]: on the one hand, *The Lord knoweth them that are his own*, and as he surely distinguishes them in every circumstance, so he bears a steady and constant favour to them, nor can any alienate them from his gracious regards; *and*, on the other side, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ*, every one that professes his religion, and pretends the least regard to him, *depart from iniquity*; let him stand off, and keep at the greatest distance from every kind and degree of immorality, from every appearance and occasion of sin. But, though our obligations to such a conduct be so many and so great, we cannot flatter ourselves that all professing Christians will be sensible of them. *For in a great house there are vessels, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood*

2 TIM. II. 19.

NEVERTHELESS, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood

a *Inscription.*] Many critics have justly observed, that the word σφραγις often signifies an *inscription*, or the *mark* made *by a seal*, as well as the *seal* itself. See Rev. ix. 4. And the expression is here used with peculiar propriety, in allusion to the custom of *engraving* upon some stones laid in the foundation of buildings the name of the *persons* by whom, and the *purposes* for which, the structure is raised. And nothing can have a greater tendency to encourage the hope, and at the same time to engage the obedience of Christians, than this *double* inscription. Dr. Whitby supposes that clause, *the Lord knoweth them that are his own*, has a peculiar reference to the *apostles*, in opposition to *heretical* teachers, and that it alludes to Numb. xvi. 5, *Septuag.* That to *know* often signifies to *regard with favour*, as well as to *distinguish*, hath been shewn elsewhere. Rom. viii. 27.

b Rashness

wood, and of earth: and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

wood and clay, the former being intended *for honourable, the other for* meaner and *dishonourable uses:* and accordingly there will be, in the church of God, persons of different characters, who will meet with very different treatment. SECT. iv. 2 Tim. II. 20.

21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.

If therefore any one cleanse himself from these, if he be careful to avoid the society of persons who have revolted from true religion, and made themselves instruments of impurity and iniquity, *he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and useful to the* immediate and personal service of his great *Lord* and Master; and such an one will be constantly *ready*, as the nobler vessels of a house, *to every good work*, which will be the surest test of our real goodness. 21

22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

But flee from all occasions of exciting or gratifying *the passions of youth;* whether, on the one hand, the love of sensual pleasure, or, on the other, rashness, contention, pride, and vain-glory [b], to which young persons are peculiarly obnoxious: for these will render thee unfit for the honour of being used by thy Lord for the purposes of his glory and the edification of his church. *And* therefore, instead of making provision for these, *pursue*, with the greatest ardour and intenseness of mind, *righteousness* and *fidelity*, *love* and *peace;* cultivate an upright, benevolent, candid temper *towards* all, and especially towards *those that invoke* the name of *the Lord* Jesus Christ *out of a pure heart*, so far as the conduct can discover the inward temper. 22

23 But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes.

But avoid foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that, how curious soever they appear, *they* only tend to *beget strifes* and contentions in the church; and I reckon it a most important part of the learning of a Christian minister to guard against such occasions of offence and mischief. 23

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto

Let the bigotted Jews, and the vain-glorious heathens, on each side, split into ever so many different sects and parties, and dispute as eagerly about such things as they will; *but the servant of the Lord*, the Christian, and especially the minister, *must not strive* in an angry and hostile manner, *but be* mild and *gentle towards all, ready* 24

b Rashness, contention, &c.] These are *youthful passions*, of the danger of which some heady young men, who may value themselves for their freedom from other scandals, seem to think but little; yet it is plain, from the *opposition* between this and the latter part of the verse, they were particularly in Paul's mind when he gave this caution.

c *That*

SECT. iv.

ready to teach the ignorant, and instead of hurting [*and*] injuring any, be willing *to endure evil* from those who, instead of receiving his
2 Tim. II. 25. doctrine, repay his kindness with outrage. *In meekness instructing opposers, if by any means God may* perhaps, in his own due time, conquer their savage prejudices, and *give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth;* of which, through the riches of Divine grace, we see some instances, even where there had been a long and
26 inveterate struggle against it. *And* surely it will be worth while to try every method on such unhappy souls, *that they may awaken* and recover themselves *out of the snare of the devil, who have* lain sleeping, and as it were intoxicated in it, having *been taken* by that subtile fowler, and, like a living prey, detained *captive by him at his* cruel *pleasure*, while perhaps they have been dreaming of liberty and happiness, in the midst of the most shameful bondage and the extremest danger [c].

unto all men, apt to teach, patient;

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. How affecting a representation is here made of the wretched
26 state of sinners! they are described as *sleeping in Satan's snare*, like birds in a net, taken alive, and at the fowler's mercy; while they imagine they can spring up whenever they please, and range at full liberty. Alas! they will soon perceive their fatal *captivity:* but they will perceive it too late, if Divine grace do not quickly *awaken* them. Who would not wish to do something for their
25 recovery? Let the *ministers* of the gospel pity them. Let us
24 pray that *God*, whose work it is, *would give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* Let us try every *gentle* method which the sincerest compassion can dictate toward effecting so happy a design, and not suffer ourselves to be transported to undue *severities* of language, or of sentiments, even though we should receive

c *That they may recover*, &c.] In order to understand this *beautiful image*, it is proper to observe, that the word ανανηφωσιν properly signifies, to *awake from a deep sleep*, or from a fit of *intoxication* (see *Elsn. Obs. Sac. in loc.*), and refers to an artifice of *fowlers* to scatter seeds impregnated with some drugs intended to lay birds asleep, that they might draw the net over them with the greater security. The interpretation which a *late writer* has given of these words, who would render them, "*being taken alive by him*, that is, the Christian minister, *for* the purposes of *the Divine will*," is so unnatural, that merely to compare it with the former is to confute it. (*Taylor on Orig. Sin*, p. 152.) Nor can any thing be more evidently wrong than to maintain that ζωγρεω necessarily implies a purpose of *preserving*, whereas it only imports *taking a captive*, without determining whether it be for servitude or for death. Compare 2 Chron. xxv. 12, *Septuag.*

receive the greatest injuries where we intend the most important kindness. SECT. IV.

Let those that have the honour to bear the most *holy* character, which any office can devolve on mortal man, avoid with the greatest care, every thing that would bring a stain, or even a suspicion, upon it. Let them revere the voice of the great *apostle*, while it animates them to *pursue righteousness* and *faith*, *love* and *peace*, *with all* their fellow-Christians of every denomination, with all *that invoke Christ* and that trust in him. So shall they be *vessels of honour*, so may they humbly hope that their *Lord* will condescend to make some special *use* of them, for the purposes of his own glory, and the salvation of their fellow-creatures. Ver. 22 21

To conclude, let ministers and people be daily reading, with all possible care, this *double inscription* on the *foundation of God;* and while we rejoice in the one, let us be admonished by the other. For what is it to us, that *the Lord knows*, distinguishes, and favours *his own*, that his almighty power protects them, and that his infinite mercy will for ever save them, if we are ourselves found among *the wicked*, *with whom he is angry every day*, among the workers of iniquity, whom he will publicly disown, and to whom he will say, *I know not whence you are.* To *name the name of Christ* with dispositions like these will be to injure and profane it; and our profession itself will be interpreted as an act of hostility against him, whom we have presumed so vainly to call the Foundation of our hopes, and the Sovereign of our souls. 19

SECT. V.

Paul cautions Timothy against that great declension and apostacy which was to prevail in the Christian world, and against those false teachers who were rising up in it; reminding him of the example he had seen in him, in the midst of such persecutions as were still to be expected. 2 Tim. III. 1—13.

2 TIM. III. 1.

THIS know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 TIMOTHY III. 1.

IT is the more necessary thus to urge thee to every precaution, and every effort, which may preserve the purity and honour of the Christian church, as, after all we can do for this purpose, such sad scenes are to open in it. We are indeed acquainted with our duty, and we shall find our own highest account in attending to it. *But this know*, O Timothy, *that in the last days*, under the evangelical dispensation, which is to wind up the economy of Providence, and is to remain in full force even to the end of the world, *difficult* SECT. V. 2 Tim. III. 1.

SECT. V.

2 Tim. III. 2.

difficult times and circumstances *shall arise*, in which it will be hard to discharge our consciences, and at the same time maintain our safety. *For men shall be lovers of themselves*[a], in the most absurd and excessive degree; *lovers of money*, so as to be impelled to the basest practices by the hopes of obtaining it; *boasters* of what they have, and *proud* pretenders to what they have not; *blasphemers* of God, and revilers of their fellow-creatures; *disobedient to parents*, notwithstanding all the obligations they are under to their care and tenderness; *unthankful*, and ungrateful to other benefactors; *unholy*, though they profess themselves devoted to God, and consecrated to his service by the most solemn rites: They will be *destitute of natural affection*, even to their own children, as well as of piety toward their parents; *implacable* where enmities have been commenced, and treacherous in their mutual engagements, when there has been a pretence of making them up[b]; *false accusers*, in which they will imitate that diabolical malignity which renders the great enemy of mankind so justly odious; *intemperate* in their pleasures, *fierce* in their resentments, cruel in their revenge; *destitute of all love to goodness*, though it so naturally extorts a tribute of veneration and affection from every human heart which is not sunk into the last degeneracy. They will be *traitors* to those that place the greatest confidence in them, such base *traitors*, as even to give up their

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.

3 Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

4 Traitors, heady, high-

a *Men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.*] Dr. Whitby takes great pains to shew that these *characters* were applicable to the Jews in the last days of their *commonwealth*; and supposes the *apostle* refers to the difficulty of retaining the Christian profession, or acting so as to preserve a safe conscience in it. Many of the lineaments here drawn, were no doubt to be found in the unbelieving Jews; but, especially considering, ver. 5—7, I rather chuse to interpret the words as describing some who not only *professed* Christianity, but pretended to *teach* it. And I must beg leave to refer my readers to that very learned and ingenious dissertation of *Vitringa (Observ. Sac.* lib. iv. cap. 7), in which he attempts to prove that there was a great alteration in the face of the Christian church between the time of Nero and Trajan, within which period he apprehends great numbers of professors to have departed from the strictness of Christian morals, as well as the purity of the faith. I cannot be satisfied that the supposed *predictions* of this remarkable event, which he produces from the Old Testament, in his viiith chapter, are so convincing as he thinks them, viz. Isa. xi. 4; xli. 10—12; xliii. 1—3; xlix. 14; l. 10; Mic. vii. 10; Psal. v. 1; xl. 13, 14; lvii. 5; lxxii. 4. His arguments from the New Testament have much greater weight, viz. Mat. x. 21, 22; xxiv. 9—13, 22; Acts xx. 29; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; 1 Pet. iv. 16, 17; with the epistle to the Hebrews, the second of Peter, and that of Jude: and I wonder he hath not added this remarkable *text* to the catalogue.

b *Implacable* and treacherous.] The word ασπονδοι certainly takes in *both* ideas, and may be applied to men, who, when once offended, will come into no *treaty* of reconciliation, and also to such as will not think themselves *bound* by such treaties, when they may answer any purposes of their own by the violation of them.

c *Insinuate*

high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ;

their brethren into the hands of persecutors ; *heady* and rash in enterprising things, which can only issue in the disturbance of society, or the ruin of those that undertake them. In the mean time, they will be *puffed up with* such *insolence* and self-sufficiency, as to despise any remonstrance which can be made to bring them to a wiser and more decent conduct ; and, upon the whole, will prove *lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God ;* who will therefore sacrifice all considerations of religion to the gratification of their appetites. And yet, in the midst of all these enormities, they will still profess themselves Christians, *having a form of godliness*, and observing with exactness the rituals and externals of religion, *but* at the same time *denying* and opposing *the power of it* in their lives, and demonstrating that it has no real influence upon them. *From such* therefore, even from all, in whom thou discernest a temper like that which I have here described, *turn away ;* avoid all intimacy with them, lest they should avail themselves of the friendship to which thou mightest admit them, as an advantage for doing further mischief ; let it therefore evidently appear, that thou givest them no countenance.

SECT. V.

2 Tim. III. 4.

5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, from such turn away.

5

6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, lead way with divers lusts;

This temper, as I have intimated before, has begun to appear in many of our contemporaries, *of which* [*number are those* artful deceivers, *who insinuate themselves*[c] *into houses, and* are especially successful in their attempt to *captivate inconsiderable women*, of low rank, and mean understandings, yet easily inflamed with passionate zeal ; being indeed, whatever pretences they may make to sanctity, *laden with sins*, and *led aside by various lusts*, which these seducers know how to flatter in such a manner as to make them their own property. These foolish creatures are *always learning*, they pretend to hear with great eagerness, and are charmed with every appearance of novelty and fervour ; *but* they are tossed about with every gale of doctrine and *never able to come to the acknowledgment of the truth*, or to attain any fixed and steady principles

6

7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

7

c *Insinuate themselves*, &c.] This character, as we hinted above, seems rather to suit disaffected and seducing Christian teachers, than infidel Jews, who no doubt carried it with an high hand, and would scorn to think of crouching to the leaders of so contemptible a sect as they called that of the Nazarenes.

d *Jannes*

SECT. V.

ciples. *And* these designing wretches, of whom I have been speaking, seize on such as their proper prey, and just *as Jannes and Jambres*[d], the Egyptian magicians, *withstood Moses* when he came to Pharaoh with a message from God, *so do these* men *also withstand the truth* of the gospel. I speak of *persons whose minds are* utterly *corrupted, who with respect to the faith are disapproved*, and worthy of being rejected as enemies to it, and unworthy to know it, though they pretend so much zeal in its defence. *But* I foresee, that *they shall not proceed much farther*[e] in these artifices, *for their folly shall be manifested to all, as theirs also was*, when God sent upon the Egyptians plagues, which far from being able to remove, or mitigate, they could not, as in former instances, so much as imitate.

2 Tim. III. 8.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

9 But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all *men*, as theirs also was.

10 *But thou hast exactly traced*, and been accurately acquainted with *my doctrine*, and my *conversation*, the steadiness of my aim, *purpose*, and resolution in the cause of God; that firm and uniform *fidelity* which I have always strenuously maintained, without yielding up any the least article of it; my *long-suffering*, when I had been treated in the most injurious manner; my *love* to all, however different in opinion, not excepting even mine enemies and persecutors; and my *patience* under such pressing trials. Particularly under the *persecutions* [and] *sufferings which befel me in* the Pisidian *Antioch*, Acts xiii. 45, *in Iconium* (xiv. 2) *in Lystra* (xiv. 19) where thou hast not only heard, but seen, *what persecutions I endured; but the Lord* Jesus, whom I serve, was still with me, and *rescued me out of* them *all*. *Yea, and all who are* resolutely *determined* upon it, *that they will live godly in Christ Jesus*[f], that they will conduct themselves by

10 But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience,

11 Persecutions, afflictions which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ

d *Jannes and Jambres.*] It is remarkable that the former of these is mentioned together with Moses, by *Pliny*, and both of them by Numenius the philosopher, quoted in *Eusebius*, as celebrated magicians. See *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. 30, cap. i. and *Euseb.* lib. 9, cap. 8. It is of no importance to enquire, by what tradition their names came down to so distant an age.

e *Shall not proceed much farther.*] Translating it thus, will easily reconcile this with what is afterwards said of their *growing worse and worse*, ver. 13; and of their word *eating as a gangrene*. Diodate indeed explains this and the 13th verse of *different* persons; this, of some who had already appeared; that, of others who were *soon* to arise. But there seems not the least need of having recourse to such a solution.

f *Live godly in Christ Jesus*, &c.] This, as Dr. Evans justly observes, may import something *peculiar* in the godliness to be exercised by Christians, as being agreeable to the revelation of Christ, animated by his example, dependent on his Spirit for assistance

Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

by the strict rules of piety, which he has prescribed, not turning aside to the right hand or the left, *shall suffer persecution*, or opposition of one kind or another; for Christ has decreed to lead all his people to glory, through a variety of difficulties and hardships. *But wicked men and impostors*, by whatever artifices they may decline persecution, are in a yet more wretched state; for they provoke God to give them up to the lusts of their own heart, and so *will grow* continually *worse and worse*, more obstinate in their opposition to the gospel and its faithful ministers; *deceiving* others indeed by false *and* treacherous pretences, but *being* themselves much more fatally *deceived* by their own corruptions, which delude them with the visionary hope of some temporal advantage, while they are plunging into irrecoverable and everlasting ruin.

SECT. V.

2 Tim. III. 12.

13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

13

IMPROVEMENT.

MUST we not, on the survey of this *scripture*, in comparison with what we every day behold in life, cry out, "*Verily these are the last days?*" They are assuredly times of *difficulty and peril. Self-love, pride, ingratitude, treachery, intemperance, insolence*, the *contempt of* all *authority*, human and divine, each, all of these characters may too plainly declare it. But none with more striking evidence than the excessive *love of pleasure*, on which so many are doting to destruction, while every consideration, both of religion and of prudence, falls at the shrine of this favourite idol. Men are *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, more than lovers of *their families*, yea, though self-interest be in many instances so scandalously pursued, yet more than lovers of *themselves;* and when they have sacrificed every thing else to their *gain*, they sacrifice even that *gain to luxury*. And would to God there was none such, even among those that retain *the form of godliness*, which so many indeed have scornfully cast off! But O! how vain the *form*, where the *power of it is thus denied!* And how peculiarly scandalous are these characters in those who call themselves *teachers* of religion! Yet to such they are here originally applied; and their race is not yet extinct.

Ver 1.

2, 3

4

5

Blessed

assistance, and his atonement for acceptance with God. Important topics, which all who desire to obtain and promote *godliness*, ought to dwell much upon. See *Evans's Christian Temper*, Vol. I. p. 192.

a *From*

SECT. V.

Blessed be God, there are those yet remaining who are the happy reverse of these; ministers, who can appeal to the consciences of men, as to their *doctrine*, their *conversation*, their *resolution*, their *fidelity*, their *gentleness*, their *charity*, and their *patience*. Happy are they, how ill soever they may be treated in the world. Happy would they be, though exposed to all the terrors of *persecution* which the *apostles* and their first followers endured! But we are all warned to *prepare for some degree of it*; and indeed who can wonder, if amidst so many evils, they who will not go on with the multitude should sometimes be rudely pressed by them; and it may be in some instances, cast down and trampled under foot. But be it so; *though cast down*, they shall *not* be *destroyed*. (2 Cor. iv. 9.) A little time will balance all. An hour of eternity will *more* than balance it. Let us guard against the *deceits* by which so many suffer. Let us guard, above all, against those deceits which men practise *upon themselves*, and whereby they hurt themselves infinitely more than all their fraud or violence can hurt any, who are not accessary to their own undoing.

Ver. 10 11 12 13

SECT. VI.

To guard Timothy against those seducing teachers, and to preserve the church from their evil influence, Paul recommends to him the study of the scriptures, and great diligence in all the parts of his ministerial work; reflecting with pleasure on his own fidelity in the nearest views of martyrdom for the truth. 2 Tim. III. 14. *to the end.* IV. 1—8.

2 Timothy III. 14.

SECT. VI.

I HAVE mentioned the case of these wretched men, who grow worse and worse, deceiving others, and themselves most of all. *But* that thou, O Timothy, mayest effectually avoid them, *continue thou*, stedfast *in the things which thou hast learnt* from me, *and hast believed* upon the authority of God speaking in and by me; *knowing from whom thou hast learnt* [*them*] and what convincing proofs I have given thee, both of my general integrity, and of that extraordinary inspiration by which I teach. *And* knowing also, *that* the oracles of the Old Testament confirm the system of doctrines which I have taught; of which thou must be very sensible, because *from thine infancy*[a] *thou hast known the*

2 Tim. III. 14.

2 Tim. III. 14. BUT continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*:

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith

[a] *From thine infancy.*] Hence it appears that *little children* may learn some useful lessons from *scripture*, and that they ought to be early initiated into the study of

faith which is in Christ Jesus.

the sacred scriptures, in which the grand learning of our Jewish nation consists, and *which* are indeed most worthy of being studied by all, as they *are able to make thee*, and all that faithfully admit and follow their guidance, *wise unto* eternal *salvation;* a science infinitely nobler and more important than human literature in its greatest refinements can pretend to teach, and which is to be learned only *through* that *faith which is in Christ Jesus.* For *the whole scripture*, received by the Jewish church, [*is*] *divinely inspired*[b], *and* therefore, as may well be imagined, is *profitable* to the highest purposes. It is fitted *for doctrine*, as it lays down the most fundamental principles of religion, in the view it gives us of the Divine nature and perfections, and *for conviction* of those opposite errors, which the licentious and perverse wit of man has invented in so great abundance, and set off with so many plausible arguments. It is also useful *for* the *reproof* of irregularities in practice, which how speciously soever they may be defended by the sophistry of those that think it their interest to plead for them, quickly fall before the authority of the Divine word. And when men have submitted to it, they will also find it effectual *for instruction in righteousness*, and will be led on from one degree of virtue and piety to another, with a progress which will continually advance, in proportion to the regard they pay to that Divine book. To this therefore, I hope thou, O Timothy, and every minister of the gospel, will diligently apply, *that the* furniture of the *man of God may be complete*, and that he may be *thoroughly fitted for every good work* which his holy calling may require. *I charge* [*thee*] *therefore*, considering what I have urged in the former part of this epistle, in the most awful manner, *before* the great and blessed *God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, his only begotten Son, *who shall judge the living and the dead*, and pronounce on them all their final and everlasting doom, *at his* last public glorious *appearance*

SECT. vi.

2 Tim. III. 15.

16 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

16

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

17

IV. 1. I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at

IV. 1.

of the sacred letters; directly contrary to what the church of Rome teaches.

b *The whole scripture* [*is*] *divinely inspired.*] Grotius translates the words, *the whole divinely inspired scripture is profitable*, &c. which they will undoubtedly bear; and as we may be sure that, by *scripture*, the apostle means the books which the Jews received as canonical, that version, gives a *true* sense; but I take this, which is our own, to be more *literal.*

c *They*

SECT. VI.

ance, when the extent *and* majesty of *his kingdom* shall appear in full display: I charge thee
2 Tim. IV. 2. to execute the important trust committed to thee with the strictest fidelity. For this purpose, *preach the word* of God with all possible seriousness and earnestness; *be instant in* the prosecution of that good work, in the stated *season* of religious assemblies, [*and*] *out of* that *season*, when occasional providences may give thee an opportunity; yea, carry it into thy private conversation, in the intervals of thy public labours. Endeavour to *convince* the consciences of men, and to reclaim them from their erroneous principles; *rebuke* them for their irregularities and vices, without fearing the face of any; and *exhort* them to diligence and zeal in the performance of their duty, *with all long suffering*, though thou mayest not immediately see the desired success; *and* enforce these exhortations with all those well-known and important motives which
3 the *doctrine* of the gospel may suggest. Seize the present opportunity with all eagerness, *for* I see that *the time will* quickly *come*, *when they will not endure* good and *wholesome doctrine*, *but*, thinking themselves above the plainness of moral and practical instructions, *shall* wantonly *heap up to themselves* seducing *teachers*[c], whose harangues shall be just *according to* the prejudices of *their own lusts*, *having* nothing else to recommend them, unless it be perhaps a glare of false and affected eloquence, which may gratify the vain curiosity and *itching ears* of their hear-
4 ers. *And* so unhappily will their minds be disposed, that *they shall turn away* [*their attention*] *from* simple *truth*, of the greatest certainty, on which nothing less than their salvation depends, *and shall be turned aside to* idle *fables*, which they eagerly drink in, under a fond semblance of mystery and obscure science, which they pretend to be veiled in these abstruse and enigmatical forms.

at his appearing, and his kingdom:

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itchings ears;

4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But

c *They shall heap up to themselves teachers.*] Mr Slater, in his *Original Draught*, &c. p. 126, urges this text, as an argument against allowing to the *people* the choice of *their own* ministers; but that right is by no means in question here. The danger there was of men's hearkening to erroneous and seducing teachers, would upon every imaginable *hypothesis*, be a solid argument for Timothy's exerting himself to the utmost, in *preaching* the word, and endeavouring to guard the churches against errors which might otherwise soon have become fatally prevalent. I must add, that the expression, *heaping up to themselves*, implies, that they should be *desirous* of such, and that they should meet with many such a character.

d *Accomplish*

SECT. VI.

2 Tim. IV. 5.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

But be thou, O Timothy, diligent and *watchful in all things* that may tend to the security of thy charge; and prepare thyself resolutely to *endure adversity*, and to *perform the* full *work of an evangelist*, and fully to *accomplish* all the branches of *thy ministry*[d]. And the rather, 6 considering how soon the world will lose whatever advantage it may now receive from my personal labours; *for* I may well conclude, from my age and circumstances, that *I am now*, as it were, *just ready to be offered*, to be poured out as a libation upon God's altar, *and the time of my departure is near* at hand; the time when I shall be dismissed from this state of confinement, when I shall weigh anchor from these mortal shores, and launch into the ocean of eternity.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

And, while I stand on the borders of that awful 7 state, it is with unspeakable pleasure I reflect, that *I have maintained the good combat* against the sharpest opposition, that *I have finished* [*my*] *race*, though it has been so arduous, that *I have kept the* holy *faith* committed to my trust, and, with the strictest fidelity, endeavoured to preserve it free from human additions and corruptions. *It remaineth*, [*that*] *a crown of righte-* 8 *ousness* and glory *is laid up* in sure reserve *for me, which the Lord, the righteous Judge*, who presides in this great exercise, *shall*, with distinguished honour, before the assembled world, *render* and award *to me, in that* illustrious *day*[e], upon which our hopes and hearts are set: *and* it is the joy of my soul to think, that he shall *not* assign it *to me alone, but to all them also who love* the thoughts of *his* final *appearance* to the universal judgment, and are, or shall be, making a wise and pious preparation for it.

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of r ghteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

IMPROVE-

d *Accomplish thy ministry.*] It must surely have been owing to a strong prepossession in favour of *Diocesan Episcopacy*, that the worthy person I mentioned above could imagine these words contained an argument for it. He explains the words πληροφορησον την διακονιαν σου, as an exhortation to *take upon him the complete office of a bishop*, because Paul himself was ready to quit it; not considering how ill this interpretation agrees with his own supposition, of Timothy's being *in the episcopal* office when Paul wrote his *first epistle* to him. Whatever Timothy's office were, the argument which Paul suggests, of the satisfaction he found in the reflection on his own fidelity, would be very conclusive.

e *In that day.*] This *text* will certainly prove, that the great and most glorious reward of faithful Christians, is referred to the *day* of general judgment. But it would be very precarious to argue from hence, that there shall be no *prelibation* and *anticipation* of this happiness in a separate state. And when the many *texts*, which have been so often urged in proof of that *intermediate happiness*, are considered, it is surprising that any stress can be laid on the objection which has been drawn from such *passages* as this.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. vi.

BEHOLD this blessed man, *this prisoner*, this *martyr of Christ*, appearing in his chains, and in the near views of a violent death, more truly majestic and happy, than *Cesar* on his *imperial throne! Blessed man* indeed; who could look upon the pouring forth of his blood, as the *libation* of a sacrifice of thanksgiving, on which he could call for the *congratulations* of his friends, rather than their *condolence*; who could *loosen* from these mortal shores, and set sail for eternity with a shout! O may we all be excited by his example to *fight the good fight*, to *finish our course*, to *keep the faith*, in the view of that *crown of righteousness*, which is not reserved only for *Paul*, or for ministers and Christians of the *first* rank, who have been eminent for the most distinguished services, *but for all who love Christ's appearance*, and whose hearts are thoroughly reconciled to his government!

Chap. iv. 6.

7

8

5 May we therefore be *watchful in all things*. May we *endure* every *affliction* which God shall lay in our way, and fill up with proper services every station in which we are fixed. Let the *ministers* of *Christ* attend to this solemn *charge*, *before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge both the quick and the dead, at his appearance and in his kingdom*. They are as much concerned in this judgment as *Timothy* or *Paul*; their own eternal state is in question, and none can have greater reason than themselves to be impressed with it. Let as many therefore as are called to it by Divine Providence and grace, *preach the word* with zeal and fervency, as well as fidelity; let them be *instant in season*, and *out of season*, with a resolution tempered with gentleness, and supported by firm faith in him, who entrusts them with the message. And let the petulancy of men, which indisposes them to *endure sound doctrine*, yet makes them need it so much the more, be considered by them as an engagement to greater zeal, rather than an excuse for remissness.

1

2

3

Chap. iii. 16, 17.

That they may be animated to it, and furnished for it, *thoroughly furnished for every good work* incumbent upon them, as *men of God*, a becoming reverence is to be maintained for the *divinely inspired scriptures*, apparently *profitable for doctrine and reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness*. Let us all esteem it our great happiness, if *from children* we *have been acquainted* with them; let us study them diligently, and take faithful care to deliver them down to those that arise after us, as the *oracles* of that eternal wisdom by which we and they may be made *wise to salvation*.

15

SECT.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle concludes with requesting Timothy to come to him, giving him an account of the manner in which he had, in his late appearance before the heathen magistrate at Rome, been deserted by men, but supported by Christ; and adding some particular salutations and directions. 2 Tim. IV. 9, *to the end.*

2 TIM. IV. 9.
DO thy diligence to come shortly unto me.

2 TIMOTHY IV. 9.

I MIGHT add much more on this occasion, but the hope I have of seeing thee ere long, makes me the easier in omitting it. I cannot but be very desirous of such an interview. *Endeavour* therefore by all means *to come to me* here at Rome as *quickly* as possible. *For* I need the assistance and company of such a faithful friend, as I have met with very unworthy treatment from some who ought to have acted in a very different manner. And I must particularly inform thee that *Demas hath forsaken me* [a], *having loved the present world, and* followed another way, as his secular views invited him. In pursuit of these, he *is gone to Thessalonica*, as *Crescens* is *to Galatia*, and *Titus*, for whom thou knowest I have a very high regard, is gone *to Dalmatia*. *Luke alone*, whose faithful friendship I have long experienced, *is* still *with me*. I desire thou wouldst *take* the first opportunity of engaging the company of *Mark*, [*and*] *bring him along with thee, for he is useful to* the advancement of *my ministry* among the Gentiles, having often attended both Barnabas and me in our progress amongst them. Thou wilt perceive, by what I have just been saying, what reason I have to wish for the society of an approved Christian friend *and* brother, at a time when I am left thus destitute: yet preferring the edification of the church of Christ to any personal consideration of my own, *I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus*, where I some years ago left thee,

SECT. VII.

2 Tim. IV. 9.

10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

10

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

11

12 And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

12

[a] *Demas hath forsaken me.*] I think we can neither be certain, that Demas was ever a good man, from Paul's speaking of him, as one whom in the judgment of charity he hoped to be so, nor can we certainly infer from his dishonourable conduct on this occasion, that he *totally* apostatized from Christianity, and much less that he never returned to a sense of it any more. John Mark had once acted a part very like this, yet was evidently restored to the esteem of our apostle. Compare Acts xv. 38, with the *next* verse of this chapter.

[b] *Bring*

SECT. VII.

thee, to take care of the flourishing church which I planted there, and with some of whose members I have had so long and intimate an acquaintance. *When thou comest* hither, as I hope thou quickly wilt, I desire thou wouldst remember to *bring* [*with thee*] *that cloak* [b] *which I left at the house of* our friend *Carpus, in Troas* [c] when I passed through it the last time. *And* bring also *the books* which I have left there, *but especially the parchments* [d].

2 Tim. IV. 13.

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee* and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

14 When I speak of these parts, I cannot forbear telling thee, that *Alexander the brazier* [e] *has brought many evils* and mischiefs *upon me.* And I doubt not but *the Lord*, who exercises a guardian care over me as his faithful servant, will sooner or later *reward him according to his works.* May it be an instructive and merciful discipline, to reform rather than to destroy him.

14 Alexander the copper-smith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works.

15 *Against whom*, in the mean time, *be thou also* particularly *upon thy guard*, or thou mayest receive much detriment from him; *for he hath* not only done me a great deal of personal injury, but hath *greatly withstood our words*, and taken every measure in his power to prevent the progress and advancement of the gospel, which is indeed wounding me in the most tender and sensible part.

15 Of whom be thou ware also: for he hath greatly withstood our words.

16 *In my first apology* before the prefect of the city, *no man* of all the Christians here at Rome, *appeared with me*, for my countenance and support, *but all*, either through treachery or cowardice, *forsook me* [f]. *May it not be charged to*

16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; *I pray God*

b *Bring with thee that cloak.*] If φελονη here signifies *cloak*, or *mantle*, it is, as Grotius justly observes, a proof of Paul's poverty, that he had occasion to send so far for such a garment, which probably was not quite a new one. But some understand by it, either a *parchment-roll* or something like a *portmanteau*, the contents of which might be more important than the thing itself.

c *At Troas.*] See the *Introduction* to this *epistle*, p. 3.

d *The parchments.*] Bishop Bull thinks these parchments might be a kind of *common place book*, in which the *apostle* inserted hints and extracts of what seemed most remarkable in the authors he read.

e *Alexander the brazier.*] The name of Alexander was so common, that we cannot certainly say, whether this were the person mentioned, Acts xix. 33, or 1 Tim. i. 20; but what is here said of this brazier agrees so well with this last passage, that I think it probable it refers to the same man. What we know of Paul's character must lead us to conclude, that if he meant not the following words as a *mere prediction*, he did not however *wish* evil to him, *as evil*, but only that he might be so animadverted upon, as to prevent the contagion of his bad example from spreading in the church, and bring him to repentance and reformation, that so he might be preserved from final destruction.

f *All men forsook me.*] Many circumstances make it astonishing, that Paul should have been deserted by the Christians at Rome, in this extremity. When he wrote his epistle to the church there, which must have been ten years before this, he speaks of their *faith*, as celebrated,

God that it may not be laid to their charge.

17 Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

to their account, as an instance of unfaithfulness to our common Master! Yet I was not left entirely destitute, *but* can say it with great pleasure, that *the Lord* Jesus Christ *stood by me, and strengthened me* with that inward fortitude of soul which no human support could have inspired; *that by me the preaching* [*of his gospel*] *might be carried on with confidence* [g], *and* [*that*] *all the nations might hear*; for I made my defence in a manner that will, I doubt not, be taken notice of, and reported abroad, much to the advantage of that sacred cause, which is dearer to me than my life. *And* though this plain and faithful testimony did indeed expose me to great danger, yet *I was* for the present *rescued*, like Daniel, *out of the mouth of the lion;* so that fierce as he was, God did not suffer him to devour me, when he seemed to have me at his mercy. *And* I am confident, that *the Lord*, whose power and faithfulness are always the same, *will rescue me* from what I fear much more than any thing this body can suffer, even *from every evil work*; will strengthen me against the most pressing and violent temptations, so that I shall do nothing unbecoming my Christian

sect. viii.

2 Tim. iv. 17.

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom; to

18

ed through the world; (Rom. i. 8.) He salutes a vast number of illustrious persons by name, and mentions many of them as his particular *friends*, (xvi. 3—15); and we may assure ourselves, that, during the *two years* he spent there in his *hired house*; when access was granted to all that desired it, the number, and probably the zeal of Christian converts would be greatly increased; as indeed he expresly assures the Philippians that it was, and that some of *Cæsar's palace* was added to them. (Phil. i. 12—14; iv. 22.) We are ready to say, How then was it possible he should be thus forsaken? But there is a material circumstance, seldom taken notice of in this connection, which accounts in a great measure for what might otherwise appear so strange. Clement, the companion of Paul, informs us, that he suffered martyrdom *under the governors*, (as Bishop Pearson and L'Enfant explain μαρτυρησας επι των ηγουμενων;) that is, as they understand it, when Nero was gone into Greece, and had left the government of the city to Tigellinus and Sabinus, prefects of the *prætorian* guard, and that monster Helius. If this be allowed, it fixes the death of Paul to A. D. 66, or 67. But the cruel persecution, which Nero had raised against the Christians at Rome, in which they were worried in the skins of wild beasts, and burnt alive for a kind of public illumination,) was, according to Tacitus, at least *two years* before this. It is possible, therefore, that many of the excellent persons mentioned above might have suffered death for their religion, or according to our Lord's advice, (Mat. x. 23,) have retired to a distance from Rome. The Asiatic Christians, who came with Paul, as it seems, to rally the broken remains of this once celebrated church, acted a mean part in deserting Paul, as the other Christians of the place did. But it is less surprising upon the supposition above, than it would otherwise would have appeared; and it might be among the first-fruits of that sad *apostacy* which Vitringa (as was elsewhere observed,) supposes to have begun in the time of Nero, and continued to that of Trajan. See *note* a, on 2 Tim. iii. 1.

g *Carried on with confidence.*] So the original πληροφορηθη, here signifies. Calvin truly observes, that it was a glorious testimony to the honour of Christianity, that the *apostle* could thus courageously maintain it when all *his friends* forsook him, and *his enemies* were so fiercely raging against him.

h *Priscilla*

SECT. vii.

tian faith, or ministerial office, *and* thus *will preserve* and conduct [*me*] *to his heavenly kingdom* with peace and triumph; *to him* therefore [*be*] *glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Tim. IV. 18.

19 I must conclude with desiring thee to *salute Priscilla and Aquila*[h], those dear friends, with whom I have had so agreeable an acquaintance and intercourse these many years; *and* also *the family of* good *Onesiphorus*. In my last journey through Asia and Greece I had the affliction to part with some of our common friends, whose conversation and company would have been very

19 Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.

20 desirable, had Providence permitted it. *Erastus* in particular *abode at Corinth*[i] *and Trophimus, I left sick at Miletus:*[k] nor did the Lord, who hath made me an instrument of miraculous healing to so many strangers, permit me at that

20 Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

21 time to be so to him. *Endeavour* therefore as I am deprived of these agreeable friends, and surrounded with so many dangers and enemies which threaten my life, *to come* to me *before winter*[l]. Several Christians here at Rome desire I would send their commendations to thee; and in particular *Eubulus salutes thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and* indeed

21 Do thy diligence to come before winter, Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.

22 *all the brethren* in general. My heart is as at all times full of the tenderest affection for thee; which

22 The Lord Jesus Christ *be* with thy spirit.

h *Priscilla and Aquila.*] This has often been urged, as a conclusive argument, to prove that Timothy was now at Ephesus, because it was there that Apollos met with them, (Acts xviii. 26;) but they might have removed from thence, as they did from Corinth, to which place they came when first banished from Rome. *Ib.* ver. 2.

i *Erastus abode at Corinth,* &c.] It is probable this was his *native city,* or at least a place where he had a stated charge. See Rom. xvi. 23. It seems, by this clause that he was in Paul's company when he parted with Timothy, as it is likely Trophimus also was. And, as none can suppose Paul would have mentioned those things to Timothy in this connection, if they had happened many years before, (Acts xix. 22,) I look upon this as a very material argument to prove that he returned into these *eastern* parts, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; though probably, if he ever saw Ephesus again, most of the ministers of that and the neighbouring places, with whom he had the celebrated interview at Miletus, mentioned Acts xx, were either dead or removed. See ver. 25, *note* f, and ver. 38, *note* r, Vol. VIII. p 209, and 213. Compare the Introduction to the first *epistle* to Timothy, Vol. IX. p. 566.

k *Left sick.*] It has been very justly argued from this *text,* that a power of working miracles did not *always* reside in the *apostles;* and indeed, if it had, one can hardly imagine that any good and useful man would have been sick, and died under their notice, which would have been quite inconsistent with the scheme of Providence. Timothy's frequent infirmities afford a farther argument to the same purpose. Compare Acts viii. 21, *note* d, Vol. VIII. p. 22. But such good men as these did not need the miraculous cure of their own distempers, to confirm their faith in the gospel.

l *Come to me before winter.*] Bishop *Lloyd* in his *Funeral Sermon for* Bishop *Wilkins,* p. 6, comparing with this text Heb. xiii. 23, concludes that Timothy did come, and was seized at Rome, and confined longer than Paul himself; but it seems much more probable that the *epistle to the Hebrews,* was written during *Paul's first* imprisonment, and consequently several years before this.

rit. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

which I cannot express better than by praying, as I most sincerely do, that *the Lord Jesus Christ*, himself may [*be*] ever present *with thy spirit*, and shed abroad those sanctifying, quickening, and comforting influences of Divine grace, which may fit thee for all thou hast to do and bear under thy Christian and ministerial character. And wherever this finds thee, I desire thou wouldst assure my fellow-Christians that I wish them well. May *grace* [*be*] *with you* all, as your circumstances require, to render you more eminently useful in the present state, and prepare you for complete and everlasting happiness in the next. *Amen.* SECT. VII. 2 Tim. IV. 22.

IMPROVEMENT.

Be this our prayer for ourselves and our friends, that the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with their spirits* and ours; that though we have not seen him here, neither can see him, we may ever feel his vital presence, and may live and act as ever near him, and as conscious that he is ever with us. Then may we promise ourselves that while *he stands by us*, we shall be *strengthened*, how weak soever we are in ourselves; that we shall be comforted, whoever may *desert us;* that we shall be rescued from the extremest dangers, *delivered out of the mouth of the* infernal *lion*, and safely *preserved to his heavenly kingdom.* Ver. 22 17 18

That such a *confessor* as the holy apostle *St. Paul* should have been *deserted*, at the time of his *apology*, when there must have been so large a number of *Christians at Rome*, may justly appear one of the most surprising circumstances recorded in the sacred *history*. It teaches us to *cease from man*, and to repose ourselves with some caution upon the friendship of the very best. It teaches us to watch over *ourselves*, *lest the fear of man* should *bring a snare* upon us, (Prov. xxix. 25,) and lead us to be ashamed of *Christ* in his members. It concurs with the apostacy of *Demas*, to warn us that we beware of *loving this present world*, and keep our eyes more steadily fixed on a better, in which our highest interest lies, and by regarding which, our souls will acquire a certain uniform tenor, that will prove their honour and their safety. 16 10

The readiness of *Paul*, amidst such a dearth of true and faithful friends, to part with those that yet remained, when he thought the service of *Christianity* required it, is an amiable and instructive part of his character. They know not the heart of a *man*, and the duty of a *Christian* aright, who know not that even the *tender* 10, 12

and

SECT. VII.

and *friendly* passions are to be guarded against, and admitted no farther than reason and religion will warrant; and that such society as is far dearer to us than any animal delight, or secular accommodation, is often to be *given up*, that our fidelity to God may be approved.

Ver. 13 Once more, it is obvious to remark, that *Paul*, though favoured with such extraordinary degrees of *Divine inspiration*, sets a proper value upon *books*, and expresses a great concern about their being safely conveyed to him. Let us therefore pity the *ignorance*, rather than imitate the *enthusiasm* and *madness*, of those that set learning at defiance, especially in the *ministers* of the gospel. Let us thankfully acknowledge the Divine goodness, in having furnished us with so many excellent *writings* of wise and pious men in all ages; and let us endeavour, by frequent converse with them, to improve our furniture, *that our profiting may appear unto all men.* Yet let us all remember, that how large and well-chosen soever our *library* may be, the *sacred* volume is of infinitely greater importance than all that *Greece*, or *Rome*, or *Britain* has produced, or the united labours of all the best of men who have written since it was concluded. And let the *Christian minister* remember, that the *two epistles*, through which we have now passed, and that which we are next to survey, are to be esteemed by him amongst the most edifying and important parts even of that incomparable and Divine book.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TITUS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO TITUS.

TITUS, to whom this *epistle* is addressed, was a Greek, (Gal. ii. 3;) and was probably converted to Christianity by St. Paul, as we may conclude from the title he gives him of *his own son after the common faith*, (Tit. i. 4,) though the particular time of his conversion cannot be ascertained.—The earliest account of him we meet with (for Luke does not once mention his name in the Acts) is in Gal. ii. 1, where the *apostle* says, he took him with him from Antioch to Jesusalem, fourteen years after his conversion, to attend the grand council that was held there, in the year 49; and, as Titus was of Gentile parents, and consequently uncircumcised, St. Paul would not suffer him to submit to that rite, that he might not seem to abridge the liberty of the *Christian Gentiles*, (ver. 3.)

Some years after this, we find the *apostle* had sent him to Corinth, (2 Cor. xii. 18,) to inquire into the state of things in that church, and particularly to learn what effect his former letter had produced. The intelligence Titus brought St. Paul at his return, gave him the highest satisfaction, as it far exceeded all his expectations, (chap. vii. 6—13;) and, as Titus had expressed a particular regard for the Corinthians, he thought proper to send him back again, with some others, to hasten the collection for the poor Christians in Judea; (chap. viii. 6.) After this, we hear no more mention of him, till he is spoken of in this *epistle*, as having been with St. Paul in Crete.—It appears, that the *apostle* had a very great regard for him, not only from his appointing him to take care of the church he had planted in Crete, but from the manner in which he speaks of his discharging the commission he gave him to the Corinthians, and the honourable terms in which he recommends him to them as *his partner and fellow-helper*; (chap. viii. 23.)

This *epistle* was most *probably* written in some part of St. Paul's last progress through the Asiatic churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; and consequently the last of his epistles, except the second to Timothy: but nothing can be *certainly* determined, either as to its *date*, or the *place* from which it was sent; for though the spurious *postscript* supposes it to have been written from Nicopolis, yet the contrary seems to be plainly intimated, chap. iii. 12; as the *apostle* says not, I propose to winter *here*, (which would have been most natural, if he had resided there when he was writing) but *there*; which shews he was at that time in some *other* place.—However, it is plain Titus was at Crete when he received it, where St. Paul had left him, to settle the church he had established there, and carry on the work he had begun. Accordingly the greatest part of the epistle is taken up in giving him directions for the more successful discharge of his ministry amongst them; and particularly for his behaviour towards those corrupt Judaizing teachers who endeavoured to pervert the faith and disturb the peace of the Christian church.

The *apostle*, after a short introduction, in which (agreeably to *the design* of the *epistle)* he intimates that he was commissioned by Christ to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him at Crete, and directs him on what principles he was to act in the ordination of those Christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches; representing them as persons not only of a blameless, but exemplary character, who should be eminent for their piety, and for every social and personal virtue, as well as thoroughly established in the Christian faith; chap. i. 1—9. And, to make Titus more sensible of the necessity of using this precaution, he puts him in mind of those seducing Judaizing teachers with which that church was infested; who, under the mask of greater zeal and knowledge than others, concealed the grossest corruption of morals, and whose mischievous attempts were the more likely to succeed, considering the general character of the Cretans. Such therefore he directs him to reprove with great severity, and, in opposition to their false and dangerous tenets, advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. And to give the greater weight to his instructions, he admonishes him to be himself an example of what he taught, and by the purity of his doctrine, as well as the innocence of his conduct, to silence his opponents, ver. 10, *to the end.* Chap. ii. 1—8. St. Paul then proceeds to urge on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station, that they might, according to their sphere, do an honour to the religion they professed; and represents the obligation they were under to such a conduct, from the great design of the gospel-institution, and our Saviour's sufferings and death, which was to deliver mankind from sin, and form them to universal holiness in heart and life, ver. 9, *to the end.*—Agreeably to this view of religion the *apostle* exhorts Titus to enforce

force subjection to the civil magistrate, and a readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention, and recommend a meek, peaceable, and forgiving temper: which he intimates might the more reasonably be expected from Christian Gentiles, as before their conversion their character had been so corrupt. This leads him to acknowledge the grace of God in Christ, to which all Christians were indebted for the change produced in them, and for the hopes of salvation they were taught to entertain: from whence he takes occasion to remind Titus of the importance of insisting upon the great doctrines of *practical* religion, in opposition to those empty speculations and useless controversies to which some were attached. In the close of the epistle he directs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and having expressed his desire to see him at Nicopolis, where he proposed to winter, he concludes with a general salutation; chap. iii. 1, *to the end of the epistle.*

Upon a review of this, and the two epistles to Timothy, it is natural to reflect how much they tend to illustrate and confirm the internal evidence of Christianity.—It has been often observed, and very justly, that nothing sets the characters of great men in so *true* a light as their *letters* to their particular friends: while they are acting in the eye of the world they frequently appear in *disguise*, and the *real* motives of their conduct lie out of sight; but in their *familiar correspondence* they open their minds with freedom, and throw off all reserve. If therefore any should object to the argument drawn from St. Paul's epistles to the *churches*, that, as they were designed for the *public* view, he would be upon his guard, not to let any expression escape him that might give the world an unfavourable idea of himself or the cause in which he was engaged; yet certainly, when he is writing, as in this and the two former epistles, to his most *intimate friends*, who were embarked with him in the same design, and with whom therefore he could use the utmost confidence, we may reasonably expect to find him disclosing his *real* sentiments, stripped of all artifice and disguise.—And now, upon the most accurate and impartial examination of these epistles, what do we discover? Can we trace any marks of insincerity and imposture? Does the *apostle* wear any other character than that in which he had appeared to the whole world? Does he drop the least hint that can lead one so much as to suspect that he had been only *acting a part*, and imposing upon mankind? Can we perceive the least shadow of *inconsistency* between the views he gives of religion in *these* and his *other* writings? Is there any thing like that *double doctrine* which some have charged upon the ancient philosophers?—On the contrary, is it not most evident, that he founded his *own* hopes, and formed his *own* conduct, upon the very same principles which he recommended to *others*; that he had no views of *secular interest* or *ambition* to gratify, and was influenced by no other *motives* than those which he openly avowed in the face of the world: in a word, that his *character*, as well as his *doctrine*, was *consistent* and *uniform*, and

his *inward sentiments* the same with his *outward profession?* The instructions he gives his friends for the exercise of their office had nothing of art or subtilty, but were all plain and simple, and centred in that grand design of advancing the interests of religion and the happiness of mankind, which ever lay near his heart: and so far is he from flattering them with the prospect of any *worldly* advantage, that he exhorts them to be ready after his example, to sacrifice every *temporal* interest, and even *life* itself, in the cause they had undertaken to support.

Now if this be allowed a just representation of the case, it will certainly follow, that the *apostle* was *himself* thoroughly persuaded of the truth and importance of those doctrines he had taught; and since it may be easily proved, that the *evidence* on which he built his faith was of such a nature, as to exclude all possibility of *mistake*, we may safely conclude, upon the credit of *his* testimony *alone* (had we no other arguments to produce), that the Christian religion is not *a cunningly devised fable*, formed to answer the ambitious or interested views of its authors, but that it is indeed *the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

TITUS.

SECT. I.

Paul, after a proper introduction, reminds Titus of the special reasons for which he left him in Crete; and directs him on what principles he should act in the ordination of those Christian ministers who were to take the oversight of particular churches. Tit. I. 1—9.

TITUS I. 1.

PAUL, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness:

TITUS I. 1.

THIS epistle is written by *Paul, a servant of* the one living and true *God, and an apostle of* his only begotten Son, *Jesus Christ, for* the advancement of *the faith*[a] *of God's chosen* people *and* to promote *the acknowledgment of the truth* of the gospel; that Divine doctrine *which [is] according to godliness,* and has the greatest tendency to promote the interest of the true religion in all its branches; Whilst it exhibits, *in* so clear a manner, *the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie,* nor deceive any of his creatures, *hath* not only, as under the former dispensation, intimated to us, but expressly *promised* to all believers, in consequenc of those great

SECT. I.

Titus I. 1.

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before [2]

a *For the faith,* &c.] This is the proper signification of κατα πιστιν, in this connection, which expresses the end to which his labours tended. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 3. See *Raph. ex Xen. in loc.*

b *Before*

SECT. i.

Titus I. 2.

great engagements into which he entered with his Son, under the character of our Surety and Redeemer, *before the world began*[b], or time was divided into these revolving periods which measure out its succeeding ages. The plan was distinctly drawn in his all-comprehensive mind; *but* he *hath* now *manifested* it, *in his own* due and well-chosen *time*, by *his word*; which administers to us that glorious hope, *by the* public *preaching* and declaration of it, *with which I was intrusted, according to the commandment* and sovereign pleasure *of God our Saviour.* And I address this epistle *to Titus*, [*my*] *genuine son, according to the* tenor of the *common faith*, even that Christian faith to which I had the happiness of converting thee: to whom with an affection becoming a father in Christ, I unfeignedly wish every desirable blessing, even *grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour*; by whom we obtain an interest in him, and hope for that eternal salvation from him, with which no inheritance on earth is by any means worthy to be compared.

before the world began;

3 But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

4 To Titus *mine* own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

For this cause I left thee in Crete, though I could have been so heartily glad of thy company in my travels, *that thou mightest set in order the things which were deficient* there, as I could not stay long enough myself to reduce them into so regular a state as I could have wished; *and* particularly, that thou mightest *ordain elders in every city*[c], in which Christian churches are planted, to whom the stated oversight of them may be committed in the Lord, *as I gave thee in charge* when I parted with thee.

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

The office is so very important, that I hope thou wilt be proportionably careful as to the character of the persons who are to be invested with

6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused

b *Before the world began.*] It seems more natural to refer this to the promise made by the Father to Christ, in the *covenant of redemption*, than, with Mr. *Rymer*, to explain it of the *promise* made, quickly after the *creation*, to our fallen parents: Gen. iii. 15. See *Rymer of Rev. Rel.* p. 49.

c *Ordain elders in every city.*] There were an *hundred cities* in the island of Crete though its dimensions were not very large; but it is well known, that every considerable town was called a *city* by the ancients. It it most likely that some congregations were settled under proper ministers while Paul was among them; but there were others not so provided, and the interposition of so wise and good a man as Titus, probably honoured with such extraordinary gifts, would no doubt, have great weight on such an occasion.

d *Believing*

accused of riot, or unruly.

with it; and *if any one is* thought of in that view, let it be one who is known to be *blameless* in his conduct, *the husband of* only *one wife*, to whom he entirely confines himself, neither allowing of polygamy, or divorce, or an irregular commerce with any other women; and let him be one *who hath believing children*[d], if he have any that are grown up, *not accused of* any kind of *debauchery, or ungovernable* in their temper and disposition, which would render them a reproach rather than an honour to the Christian name. I must insist on a care in this respect, *for* it is evident, that the disorders of children often reflect a dishonour on their parents, and indeed arise from something amiss in them: but *a bishop*, or overseer of a Christian congregation, which the elder we speak of, by virtue of his office, is, *must* necessarily *be blameless*[e], *as* he is, in that society over which he presides, *the steward of God*, who is appointed in his name, to take care of his family. He must *not* therefore be fierce and *self-willed*, obstinate, morose, and arrogant[f], *not soon provoked* to be angry, *not one who sits long over* his cups, and loves to drink large quantities of *wine, not a striker* of others, by which, whatsoever, his provocation may be, he always degrades himself in the eyes of those that are witnesses of the quarrel, *nor greedy of sordid* and infamous *gain*: *But* he ought to maintain a character directly the opposite of all these, and to be *hospitable, benign, sober*, and grave in his

sect. i.

Titus I. 6.

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

7

8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

8

d *Believing children.*] This is mentioned with great *propriety*; for, if a man were not careful to instruct his *children* in the principles of Christianity, there would be great reason to doubt, whether he were *hearty* in the belief of it *himself*, and under a governing sense of its truth and importance; and, if a man had only *unbelieving* children in his house, that is, such as were so obstinate that they could not be brought to embrace Christianity, by any of the arguments which could be laid before them in that age of *miracles*, it would be a great discouragement, and in some circumstances, a great hindrance to him, from pursuing the duties of a Christian elder, or bishop. And those evils, into which such obstinate infidel *children* might fall, would very probably, bring a reproach upon the *family*, which might, in a degree, hurt the character of him who presided in it.

e *For a bishop must be blameless.*] It has been often observed, that, if the bishop, of whom Paul speaks, had been invested with an office *distinct* from, and *superior* to the *elder* mentioned above, there could have been no room to conclude, that an *elder must be blameless*, because a bishop must be so, though the argument would have held strongly in an inverted order. By what degrees, and on what reasons, the distinction was afterwards introduced (as a distinction to be sure there early was) it is not my business here to inquire.

f *Self-willed*, obstinate, morose, and arrogant.] *Raphelius* has taken a great deal of pains to shew that this is the proper signification of *αυθαδη*, the word here used. See *Raph. ex Herod. in loc.*

SECT. i.

Titus I. 9.

his deportment, *righteous, holy*, devout, and *temperate* in all things: *Holding fast*, in the most resolute manner, *the faithful word which he hath been taught* by those who were commissioned to publish it to the world, *that* so *he may be able both to instruct* others *in sound doctrine, and to convince* and silence *those that contradict it.*

9 Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gain-sayers.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 NEVER let it be forgotten by any that call themselves *Christians*, that *the faith of God's elect is the acknowledgment of the truth which is according to godliness.* Never let the great design of *Christianity* be lost in an eager contention for any of its *appendages*, or any of its *parts*. Yet alas, how often has it, in particular instances, been *wounded almost to death*, in a furious attempt to rescue it, and that sometimes perhaps, from only an imaginary danger.

2 That we may be more sensible of its *vital* influence, let us ever retain *the hope of that eternal life* which it proposes, as the great end of all our pursuits; even of that life *which God that cannot lie hath promised.* Let us rejoice to think that so immense a superstructure has so firm, so divine a foundation; and let us never give it up for any thing that a flattering world, always ready to engage, and slow to perform, can promise.

Let us ever be very thankful for the provision God hath made 3 *for the manifestation of his word, through preaching*, and for his goodness in raising up faithful *pastors* to his church, *overseers* in 7, 8 every age, who have been *blameless, sober, just, holy, and temperate.* Such may all be that appear under that sacred character; able, *by their doctrine to instruct*, by their reasoning *to convince*, by their practice to edify; ever solicitous, that they may not neg- 9 lect their *pastoral* services, that they may not *lord* it proudly over their *brethren*, that they may not be transported by furious *passions*, or misguided by *rash* conclusions, or perverted by low 7 *interests*, and the *greediness of filthy lucre;* but that they may approve themselves the faithful *stewards of God*, and promote the good order of his house; and so far as their influence can reach, the happiness of every member of his family.

6 In order to this, let them look well to *their own* houses, that nothing may be wanting on their part to make their *children tractable, faithful and sober.* And let the *children* of ministers consider the obligations they are under to cultivate a *teachable* spirit, and to maintain the strictest decency in their whole deportment, as remembering the superior advantages they may be supposed to enjoy for *religious* improvement, and how much a *minister's* reputation and usefulness depend upon the regularity of his family.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Paul cautions Titus against seducing teachers, and the native vices of the Cretans; and advises him to accommodate his exhortations to the different sorts of persons with whom he conversed, according to their respective sexes, ages, and circumstances. Titus I. 10, *to the end.* Chap. II. 1—8.

Titus I. 10.
FOR there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision;

TITUS I. 10.

SECT. ii.

Titus I. 10.

I HAVE particularly insisted upon it, that a bishop should be able to convince gainsayers, as well as to instruct candid and obedient hearers. And indeed the precaution is very necessary at present, and particularly in the place where you now preside; *for there are many disorderly [persons] and vain talkers, who are deceived in their own minds*, in consequence of which it is no wonder if they are active in deceiving others. And this is *especially* the case with *those of the circumcision*, who are so eager to impose on their Gentile brethren the ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as if Christianity itself were insufficient to save us without them: *Whose mouth must* therefore *be stopped* by solid 11
arguments, and their unreasonable clamours silenced by the strenuous exercise of discipline: for they are persons *who* are so active in spreading these mischievous notions, that they *overturn whole families, teaching things which they ought not for the sake of infamous gain;* hoping by their doctrines to secure the favour of some rich men, who never think they can do enough for those preachers that support their own factions and dividing notions.

11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

I know that there are many such at present in 12
your island; and I remember that Epimenides, *one of their [countrymen]*, a poet in such high renown, that I may call him *a* kind of *prophet of their own* [a], *has said, the Cretans are always liars, pernicious savage beasts*, and yet *slow*

12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretans *are* always liars,

a *A prophet.*] Epimenides, whose words Paul here quotes, is said, by Diogenes Laertius, to have been a great favourite of the gods; but Aristotle says he never foretold any future event; which, as Dr. *Scott* justly observes (*Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 650), is a plain argument that the word *prophet* is sometimes used in a a large sense, for one who is supposed, by the person applying the title to him, to be an *instructor of men in Divine things*, from whom the will of the *Deity* may be learnt.

SECT. ii.

Titus I. 12.

slow bellies[b], a wretched compound of luxury and idleness, fierceness and falsehood, which makes it exceedingly difficult to reform them, or even to live safely and quietly among them. *This witness* concerning them *is*, in the general, *true*, though some particular persons may be found of a different character. *For which cause rebuke them severely*[c], when they begin to shew a disposition to corrupt Christianity; *that they may be sound in the faith*, and that the simpler part of them may be preserved from the dishonest artifices and attempts of others. And particularly, that they may *not* fall into the folly of *giving heed to Jewish fables, and to the commandments* and traditions *of men, who pervert the truth* of the gospel with those human mixtures by which they have in a great measure spoiled and enervated the law of Moses, for which they pretend so great a zeal.

ars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

13 This witness is true: wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

I know they value themselves highly upon the distinctions of food, which they inculcate as of so great importance to purity. But they are much mistaken. *To the pure indeed all things* [*are*] *pure.* A man that habitually exercises a good

15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled,

b *Cretans are always liars,* &c.] Perhaps it might have been in some views more proper to have translated this *Greek verse* in such a manner, that it might have read as a *verse* in English, "*False Cretans!*" "*Savage beasts, with bellies slow!*" It is evident the poet here suggests a remarkable *contrast*, to shew what a mixture there was of *fierceness* and *luxury* in the characters of the Cretans. Savage beasts are generally active and nimble; but *these men*, while they had the *fury* of lions and tigers, indulged themselves so much in the most sordid idleness and intemperance, that they grew (as it were) *all belly*; and like a breed of *swine* common in the *eastern* countries, were often so burdened with fat that they could hardly move. As for their proneness to *falsehood*, it is well known that κρητιζειν, *to talk like a Cretan*, was a proverb for lying (as κορινθιαζειν, to *live like a Corinthian*, was for a luxurious and debauched life). See *Erasm. Prov.* p. 642, 643), and it is remarkable that *Polybius* scarce ever mentions this nation without some severe *censure*. See *Raphel. e Polyb. in loc.*

c *Rebuke them severely.*] Αποτομως, with a *cunning severity*. From whence Mr. *Blackwall* infers, that it is a vain pretence that only *gentle* and *soft* expressions are to be applied to people that renounce good principles, and corrupt the gospel. *Black. Vind.* Vol. I. p. 308, 309. But Paul speaks of reproving *vice*, not *error*; and if any consequence is to be drawn from one to the other, the remark is to be admitted with much *caution*, considering to what a degree pride and passion often transport men, even in the management of *theological* controversies, beyond all bounds of prudence, charity, and decency. Timothy is exhorted to *rebuke with all long-suffering* (2 Tim. iv. 2), and some account for the difference, by the different *tempers* of the reprovers; supposing that of Timothy might be *warmer* than that of Titus; others, by the different *character* of the persons to be reproved; as the Ephesians seem to have been more gentle, obliging, and complaisant, the Cretans more obstinate, rough, and headstrong. But the best reply seems to be this, that there is a *degree* of *long-suffering* and gentleness, very consistent with all that *severity* which faithfulness requires; which is not that of boisterous passion, ill-nature, and scurrility, but of *meek*, though *resolute* zeal for God, and friendship to the offender; which yet will not be silenced by trifling excuses, nor fail seriously to represent the fatal consequences that may attend the evil reproved.

filed, and unbelieving, *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

good conscience towards God, according to the best of his knowledge, is accepted of him, whether he do, or do not, abstain from such particular kinds of food as they scruple; *whereas, to the polluted and unbelieving*, which, alas, is too generally their character, *nothing* [*is*] *pure, but their very mind and conscience is defiled*, and they pollute, as it were, every thing they touch; they sin in all their actions, and even in those very meals in which they are most careful to abstain from what they have been taught to esteem common and unclean. I speak not now of all who practise Jewish ceremonies, but of those [*who, while*] *they profess to know God*, and glory in their relation to him, as his peculiar people, *in works deny* [*him*], and act as if they disbelieved his very existence; *being abominable* to all that can judge of true worth, *and disobedient* to the plainest dictates of duty, *and* with respect *to every good work reprobate*, disapproved and condemned, when brought to the standard of God's word, though they are among the first to judge and condemn others.

SECT. ii.

Titus I. 15.

16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

16

CHAP. II. 1. But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

Such is the temper and character of many! *But do thou*, O Titus, not only guard against the infection thyself, but endeavour to fortify others against it, and *speak the things which become wholesome doctrine*, doctrine which may tend to promote the health and happiness of those minds by which it is imbibed. And endeavour to suit thy instructions to *the* different characters of persons whom thou addressest. When, for instance, thou art applying thyself to *aged men* [*admonish*] them *to be watchful* against temptations, which might dishonour their advanced years, by drawing them into any unseemly behaviour: to be *grave* in their whole deportment, avoiding such levities as are, even in youth itself, rather pardonable than commendable, but in those who are quitting the stage of life highly indecent. Press it upon them, that they be *sober* and temperate in the use of animal pleasures, as their highest relish for them may well be supposed, by this time, to be abated. In a word, that they be *sound*, healthful, and vigorous in the several graces of the Christian temper, and particularly *in faith, in love*, and *in patience*; that the principles of Christianity may be retained, and have a suitable effect upon their hearts, and produce un-

Chap. II. 1.

2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience:

2

SECT. ii. Titus II. 2.

bounded charity, and a calm composure under the calamities they may suffer from the hand of God, or the persecutions they may meet with in the cause of the gospel.

3 *The aged women, in like manner,* [*exhort*] *to that steadiness which becometh saints,* and suits the holy profession they make: that they be *not false accusers* of others, a character rather to be expected from the great enemy of mankind, who has his name from thence, than from the disciples of the benevolent Jesus. Urge them also, that they be *not given to much wine,* for some of the Cretan women, as well as men, are infected with that luxurious evil. And, as it may be reasonably expected, that persons so advanced in life should have laid up a treasure of prudence and religious wisdom in their minds, press them, in such a manner as becomes their private station, to be *teachers of that which is good:*

3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 And particularly, *that they wisely admonish the younger women;* for whom they ought to maintain a maternal affection, and form them, on discreet maxims, to a prudent care in future life; teaching them *to love* and honour *their husbands; to love their children* with such a true affection as shall engage them to use the most pious and tender care in forming their minds, by all the offices of a good education, so many of which will naturally depend upon the mother.

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

5 Let them inculcate it upon these young mistresses of rising families, [*that they be*] *discreet* and *chaste,* attentive to domestic affairs, and in that view *keeping at home*[d], to look after them with prudence and care; that they be *good,* kind, and benevolent in their behaviour to all, and, particularly, *obedient to their own husbands, that* so *the word of God,* which they profess to have received into their hearts, and to reverence as their oracles, *may not be blasphemed* by their foolish or perverse, rebellious or licentious conduct.

5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

6 *In like manner* also, *exhort the young men,* the hope of rising families, upon whom so much of the credit and support of the gospel will depend, that they accustom themselves betimes *to be sober* and steady in their behaviour, superior to

6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded,

d *Keeping at home,* to look after, &c.] Elsner has shewn, in a learned note on this place, that the word οἰκουρὸς is used by several of the best authors to express both these ideas.

to sensual temptations, and constant in the exercise of every part of self-government. SECT. ii.

7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity.

And, that this address to them and others may be more successful *in all things*, be still *shewing thyself a pattern of good works*, by which others may model their conduct with advantage: while employed *in teaching*, be constantly [*exercising*] *uncorruptness*, that nothing may be spoken but the genuine truth; and let it be attended with a *gravity* in declaring it, proportionable to its importance, and proceed from *sincerity* of heart; Still uttering *wholesome speech* 8 *that cannot be confuted, that he who is on the contrary side*, and will obstinately persist in his infidelity, *may be ashamed* of his opposition, *having no evil to say of you*, or those committed to your care; but may be obliged, with all his prejudices, to acknowledge that you are a worthy president over a worthy and valuable society of men. Titus II. 7.

8 Sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHILE we are reading the *word of God*, let us attentively ob- Ver. serve what characters are adorned with honour, and what are branded with infamy. It is melancholy to think that any *nation*, though ever so small, ever so remote, ever so destitute of cultivation and instruction, should deserve the characters which *Epimenides* gave of the *Cretans*, and which *Paul* found reason to 12 confirm: that *luxury and fraud, idleness and fury*, dissonant as they may seem, should be their governing inclinations. Sad distempers in the minds of men! But how peculiarly lamentable, when they prevail among *professing Christians!* for among those that are Christians *indeed* they cannot possibly prevail. Yet surely there are not a few, even in *Britain*, with all its advantages, who, while *professing to know God*, and *Christ Jesus* his Son, *in* 16 *works deny them*. Such are *abominable*, in proportion to the degree in which they are *disobedient;* and, as they are *reprobate to every good work* now, must expect to be rejected with abhorrence at last by that God whose name they have blasphemed, and whose Son they have dishonoured.

To remedy, and, if it be possible, to prevent such evils, let the *ministers of Christ* be still applying themselves, with suitable *exhortations* and *charges*, to all with whom they are concerned. Let Chap. ii. them apply to the *aged* and the *young;* and let the *aged* of both 2, 6. *sexes* use that authority which their more advanced progress in life may give, to enforce upon the rising generation lessons of wisdom

SECT. ii. wisdom and piety, according to their respective sexes and circumstances in life: that *prudence and chastity, economy and sweetness of temper*, a *subjection to their husbands*, formed on love and on
Ver. 4, 5 religion, may be the character of *young wives;* and that they may join to it that very important duty, of a pious care in the
6 *education of those children* which God may give them. And may the *sobriety of young men* encourage a hope, that they will preside over their families in the fear of God, and repay the goodness of such amiable consorts! And may the *teachers*, whether in public or private life, be themselves *examples* of the virtues they inculcate; that they who study to asperse *Christianity*, may find themselves silenced, till their *shame* turns into a worthier affection; till their *silence* breaks out into praise, and they, imbibing the like principles, feel them productive of the like virtues!

SECT. III.

Paul urges on Titus a care to instruct servants in the duties of their station; and represents their great obligations to discharge them, from a general view of the design of the gospel, and the love of our Redeemer in it. Tit. ii. 9, *to the end.*

TITUS II. 9.

SECT. iii. WHILST thou art, according to the direction I have given thee above, instructing
Titus II. 9. the superior ranks of mankind, I would not have thee neglect the lowest; but [*exhort*] their slaves and other *servants*, who are honoured with a call into the Christian church, *to be subject to their own masters*, with reverence and obedience; *pleasing* [*them*] *in all things*, so far as they lawfully may, and *not answering again*, in a pert and insolent manner, if they are reproved by them, even though it should be un-
10 justly, or with an excess of severity. *Not privately defrauding* them[a] of any thing that is committed to their trust, *but shewing all good fidelity* upon every occasion; *that* so, instead of bringing any reproach upon religion, *they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, and

TITUS II. 9.

EXHORT servants to be obedient unto their own masters, *and* to please *them* well in all things; not answering again;

10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

a *Privately defrauding.*] The word νοσφιζειν properly signifies to *keep back part of the worth of any thing*, and is used in the case of *Ananias' secreting* a *part*, where the *whole* was pretended to be returned; Acts v. 2, 3. This *servants*, at least among the heathens, might probably do when employed by their masters to vend commodities; and other fraudulent practices, among persons of their rank, were so common, that the same word in the Latin language, [*Fur*] is used for a *servant*, and a *thief*.

b *The*

and recommend it to the esteem of their masters and others, when they shall observe its influence on all its professors, to make them careful in the discharge of every social and relative duty. SECT. iii. Titus II. 10.

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;

For the saving grace of God, in the gospel-dispensation, *hath appeared unto all men*, to men of all nations, and of all ranks and orders of life, for this great purpose, that it may train them up for eternal salvation, by a holy temper, and a useful exemplary behaviour. This it effects under Divine influence, by *instructing us* all, wherever it comes, *that denying* the solicitations of *ungodliness and worldly lusts*, to which men of this world so naturally abandon themselves, *we should live soberly* in the government of our appetites *and* passions; *righteously* in our conduct towards our fellow creatures; *and piously* in our behaviour towards God, and converse with him, while we are by his providence continued *in this present* vain and transitory *world;* through which we trust he is leading us to a blissful immortality. And this is the great object which he requires us still to keep in view; and that we should all, in our different situations, be *waiting*, with ardent expectation and desires, *for the blessed hope* which he hath set before us, *and* for the full consummation of it, in *the glorious appearance of the great God, and* of *our Saviour Jesus Christ*[b]; who shall be manifested with divine pomp and majesty, in the last day, to redeem all his servants from the power of the grave and to conduct them in their complete persons, to the full and everlasting enjoyment of his heavenly kingdom.

11

12 Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;

12

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

13

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

Such are our sublime hopes from this glorious Lord, to whom we have all vowed subjection, whether we be bond or free; even to him *who gave himself* up to ignominy, torment and death *for us, that he might* thereby *redeem us*, not only from final vengeance and destruction, but *from* the power of *all iniquity; and* might *purify to himself a peculiar people*, who should thankfully own themselves his property, and express their

14

b *The great God and our Saviour.*] The words τε μεγαλε Θεε και σωτηρος ημων, might with propriety be rendered, *our great God and Saviour*, though they are also susceptible of the other version. But it is certain, that if Christ be here called *our great God*, it is not in any view of *opposition* between *Him* and the *Father*. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 27. Mr. *Fleming*, in support of this interpretation, observes (*Flem. Christol.* Vol. I. p. 203), that we never read in scripture of the *Father's* appearance.

SECT. iii.

their gratitude for such inestimable favours, by being not only careful to avoid the practice of evil, but *zealous of good works*, active in all the duties of life, and in every office of righteousness and goodness to each other. The highest of mankind are not above owning the obligation, and it is his will that the lowest should remember it. *These things* therefore *speak* boldly, *and* earnestly *exhort* all thine hearers to attend to them. *And*, if they fail of regarding them in a proper manner, *rebuke* them *with all authority*, as one that knows he has a Divine commission to support him: and, upon the whole, *let no man despise thee;* but endeavour to give these exhortations with that solemnity and dignity, and to enforce them by that wisdom and sanctity of behaviour, which may set thee above all danger of contempt.

Titus II. 14.

unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

15 These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. HARDLY does the word of God afford a more instructive and comprehensive *summary* of the *gospel*, than that which is here before us. It gives us a view of the *nature* of the dispensation, as a *doctrine of grace;* and, at the same time, *a doctrine according godliness.* It hath *appeared to all men*, and it *bringeth them to salvation*, by inculcating the most salutary lessons that man can receive. It teaches us *to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts*, how pressing soever their solicitations may be. It instructs us in all the branches of our *duty, to God, to ourselves*, and *to our fellow Christians.* It guides us to uniform and complete goodness; not extolling any one part, to the neglect or injury of the rest, but tending to produce this beautiful birth, entire in all its members, and then to nourish it to its full maturity. As we are slow of heart to attend to such instructions, it enforces them with *motives* the most generous and the most animating. It represents to us, as it were in *prophetic* vision, *that blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;* when he shall come with everlasting blessings in his hands, to reward all his faithful people; and with the terrors of Divine vengeance, to be poured forth upon all that have rejected the authority of his gospel. And that the most powerful considerations of *gratitude*, may join with those of the highest *interest*, it directs our eyes to this Divine triumphant *Saviour*, as having once *given himself* to torture and death *for us, that he might redeem us from*

from all iniquity, and purify us to himself, a peculiar people, devoted to God, *and zealous of good works.* And surely if this view cannot prevail upon us to consecrate ourselves to God, and to engage with vigour in his service, we must be utterly insensible, and worthy of the severest punishment. SECT. iii.

Let these lessons, therefore, every where *be taught with all authority.* Let them be addressed at once to *the meanest* and the *greatest* of mankind; that they may join in a pious care, *to adorn the doctrine of such a Saviour,* and to secure their share in *such* a salvation. Ver. 15

SECT. IV.

The Apostle concludes his epistle with exhorting Titus to recommend obedience to magistrates, and readiness to all good works; to caution against censoriousness and contention: acknowledging the grace of God, as that to which all Christians owe their hopes of salvation, and strongly pressing him to insist upon the great doctrines of practical religion, in opposition to those idle controversies to which many were attached. He also instructs him how to proceed with respect to heretical teachers; and closes with giving him some directions about meeting him at Nicopolis, and a general salutation to all his friends. Tit. III. 1, *to the end.*

Titus III. 1.

PUT them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

Titus III. 1.

SECT. iv.

AMONG other useful lessons, which it will be thy duty to give the Cretans, while thou continuest with them, *remind them of being subject to* those *principalities and powers* which God hath set in supreme authority over them, by no means excepting those who stand at the greatest distance from Christianity: exhort them also *to obey* subordinate *governors;* and, upon the whole, *to be ready to every good work,* in every relation which they sustain in life. Charge them *to calumniate no man* [a], *not to be contentious,* [*but*] *gentle* in their whole demeanor, *shewing all meekness to all men,* even those from whom they may receive the greatest provocation. Titus III. 1.

2 To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. 2

a *Calumniate no man.*] Not even your Pagan, or Jewish neighbour, says good Dr. Barrow, (vol. I. p. 162,) however enormous in their lives, or cruel in their behaviour to you.

b *We*

SECT. iv.

Titus III. 3.

vocation. Let us not bear ourselves too highly, on the superiority of our own characters, be they now ever so blameless, or ever so exemplary; *for we ourselves*[b], *also were formerly foolish*, as well as others, *disobedient* to the Divine authority, and perhaps to those whom God had invested with power over us; *wandering* from the paths both of truth and virtue, and *enslaved to various lusts, and pleasures;* in the pursuit and gratification of which we degraded the nobler powers of our souls. We were *living in malice and envy, hateful* ourselves while under the tyranny of such fierce and detestable passions, [*and*] *hating one another*, on account of little clashings and oppositions in our temporal interests, while we forgot the great ties and bonds which ought to have endeared us to each other.

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating, one another.

4 *But when the* admirable *kindness and love of God our Saviour*[c] *towards man*, so signally displayed in the gospel, *appeared* to us, we were delivered from this miserable condition: the remembrance therefore of this deliverance ought to make us compassionate, rather than severe, towards others in the same unhappy circumstance in which we once were; especially when we consider the manner in which it was accomplished. For it was *not by* any *works of righteousness which we* ourselves *had done*; for any acts of obedience, whether to ceremonial or moral precepts, by which we had made ourselves worthy of his favourable regard; *but according to his own mercy*, that *he saved us* from condemnation and ruin, *by the washing of regeneration*[d], *and*

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing

b *We ourselves.*] Dr. Whitby pleads, this cannot be applicable to Paul himself, and argues from Acts xxiii. 1; 2 Tim. i. 3; Phil. iii. 6. But I am persuaded that, when the *apostle* wrote this, he had such sublime views of the *purity* of God's law, and the *imperfection* of his own best obedience, how capable soever of being justified *to men*, that notwithstanding all he says in the text quoted, he could apply what he here wrote to much of *his own* character while an enemy of Christianity. Compare note e below.

c *God our Saviour.*] It is observable, that *God the Father* is here called *our Saviour*, to intimate, that it was his paternal *love* to us that engaged him to appoint *his Son* to redeem us, and to perform all those important offices for us, by which he accomplishes our salvation.

d *By the washing of regeneration.*] This hath often been explained of *baptism*, and Mr. Joseph Mede insists upon it, that it alludes to cleansing the new-born infant from the *pollutions* which necessarily attend it. (Ezek. xvi. 4—6.) But I cannot think this interpretation at all favourable to the doctrine of *baptismal regeneration;* since it is not by *washing* the *infant* that the *birth is produced*; and therefore, it can surely signify no more, than that they who are *regenerated* are to be thus *washed*. I have observed elsewhere, that λουτρον, the word here used, is by no means entirely

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; which by its purifying influence operates at first to turn us to God, and brings us into the number of his children, and afterwards advances the happy work, by improving us more and more in the Divine life and image: Even by that Spirit

Titus III. 5.

6 Which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour:

which he poured out upon us richly[e], and abundantly, in his various gifts and graces, *by Jesus Christ our Saviour*, in virtue of whose intercession it has been imparted to the children of men; *That being justified by his grace, we*

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

might become heirs of the most valuable blessings, *according to the hope of eternal life*, which as the gift of that grace he hath exhibited to our believing views, as the great and noble object of our pursuit. [*This*,] which I have here

8 *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.

been attesting, [*is*] *a faithful saying*, most credible in itself, as well as of great weight and importance; *and concerning these things*, these distinguishing principles of the gospel, *I will* and charge *that thou* steadily *affirm* and *constantly* inculcate them; *that* so *they who have believed in God*, and by baptism professed to embrace this gospel, may not imagine, that by the dispensation of grace they are excused from the observation of duty; but, on the contrary, that being thus engaged, and encouraged by such grace and hope, they *may be* so much the more *careful*, thoughtful, and diligent *to signalize themselves* as examples of the greatest zeal *in good works*. *These things are good and profitable to men*: there is a beauty and advantage in them which nothing can equal. Let these therefore be the darling topics of thy preaching, as thou desirest the edification and salvation of thy hearers.

9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies,

But avoid, and endeavour to guard others against *foolish questions*, which the Judaizing teachers are ready to start, that tend only to amuse

entirely synonymous to λουτρον, a laver. The sense here given of this much controverted passage is what I verily believe to be the justest and safest; though I am well aware, that the Christian church soon began to lay a disproportionable stress on *forms*, and to ascribe too great efficacy to the ritual of *baptism*. (See the preface and postcript to my *Sermons on Regeneration, second edition.*)

These words have been explained as referring to Paul alone, and the effusion of the Spirit upon *him*, to qualify him for his extraordinary office. But, to say nothing of the *harshness* of this *interpretation*, and the violence it must do to several *phrases* here used, it is evident that it would make the *text* quite *foreign* to the purpose for which it is introduced, viz. of dissuading from severe and uncharitable censures.

[e] *Which he poured out upon us richly.*]

[f] Perplexed

SECT. iv.

Titus III. 9.

amuse an idle curiosity; *and* those perplexed *genealogies*[f], about which they so eagerly debate, *and* other *strifes and contentions about the law* of Moses; *for they are unprofitable and vain*, not only consuming to no purpose that time which is capable of much better improvement, but also tending to discompose the mind, to alienate the affections of Christians from each other, and to render them indifferent to the proper duties of life.

logies, and contentions and strivings about the law: for they are unprofitable and vain.

10 And *a man that*, on this occasion, or any other, *is a* factious and obstinate *heretic*[g], that introduces such controversies as these into the church, and perversely maintains and propagates them, in a manner injurious to the peace of society, *after the first and second admonition* from thee and the church, given with proper solemnity, *reject*, and declare him unfit to be any longer looked upon as

10 A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject;

11 a member of it. *Knowing that such a one*, who is so fond of his own darling notions, that he will ruin the peace of the church for them, and will not submit to thy remonstrances, and those of the wiser and better part of the society, *is perverted* by some very ill principles, whatever zeal he may pretend for what he maintains as truth; *and* that he not only errs, but *sins* too, in such obstinate efforts to diffuse his errors, *being* indeed *self-condemned*, and judged out of his own mouth, as his own words furnish sufficient matter of conviction; and, while he makes such a breach in the church, he in effect passes on himself that sentence of separation from it, which

11 Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

f Perplexed *genealogies.*] It is well known that the Jews carried their fondness for these to a great excess; and Jerome tells us, they were as well acquainted with those from Adam to Zerubbabel, as with their *own names*.

g *Heretic.*] After all the tedious *controversies* which have arisen about the sense of this *text*, I have been obliged to acquiesce in that given in the *paraphrase* being well assured, that a person may be said to be *self-condemned* if he furnish *matter of conviction* against himself. Compare Heb. xi. 7; Mat. xii. 41, 42; Acts xiii. 46: Job xv. 6; Luke xix. 22. And indeed, if Dr. Whitby's interpretation, borrowed and defended by Dr. Foster, is to be admitted, viz. that he is a heretic who teaches directly *contrary* to what he inwardly *believes*, the *truth* or *falsehood* of his notions will be a matter quite *indifferent* as to fixing this censure upon him; and a man, who was really an atheist, might be subject to *condemnation*, as a heretic, for teaching the most *orthodox* system of Christianity that can be conceived, if his secret atheism should by any means be discovered. And so the word *heresy* will be made to signify a kind of *solemn lying*; which is such an abuse of speech as I suppose few will be capable of admitting. I shall only add, that, as Dr. Foster is obliged to allow there are *fundamental* errors, for which, how *sincerely* soever received and maintained, a man ought to be separated from a Christian society, the dispute between this learned *gentleman* and his *antagonist*, was brought to this question, what St. Paul calls *heresy*? and the hints laid down above convince me, that what Dr. Whitby has said on this head cannot be defended, even by this ingenious *reviver* of it.

h *There*

which he well deserves to lie under till he returns to a better temper.

12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis; for I have determined there to winter.

When I shall send to thee Aremas, or Tychicus, to supply thy place in Crete, as I hope quickly to do, *endeavour to come to me at Nicopolis; for there I have determined to pass the winter*[h], if Providence gives me an opportunity.

13 Bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

As *Zenas, the* worthy *lawyer*, who though well versed in those studies, on which some of the Jewish brethren value themselves so highly, is now a sincere and active Christian, *and* my eloquent and pious friend *Apollos*, will be with thee when this comes to thy hand, or quickly afterwards, I desire thou wouldest *bring* them *forward on their journey* to me, *with* readiness and *diligence;* and take all the care thou canst, *that nothing* convenient *may be wanting to them* which thou canst supply them with. I hope these good men will meet with that hospitable treatment, among the Christians in your parts, which their character deserves; *and let* all *those that belong to us*, and call themselves Christian brethren, whether they were before Jews or Gentiles, *learn to distinguish themselves in good works, for necessary purposes* of aid and service to others; *that they may not be unfruitful*, and act as if they had learned nothing but barren speculations from that religion which is so well calculated to inspire and animate every sentiment of benevolence and generosity.

13

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

14

15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

All the Christians *that are* here *with me salute thee*, in an affectionate and respectful manner. *Salute them who love us in the* bonds of our common *faith;* and assure my Christian friends that I feel an equal affection for them. *Grace* and peace, and every other blessing, from our Father and Saviour [*be*] *with you all. Amen.*

15

IMPROVE-

h *There I have determined to pass the winter.*] *Several* cities of this name are mentioned in antiquity; one, not far from Philippi, in Macedonia; another in Epirus, which took its rise and name from the victory of Augustus over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium. Mr. L'Enfant is of opinion this *last* is referred to here, supposing that Paul intended a visit to those in our near Illyricum, among whom he had preached the gospel; Rom. xv. 19. But Mr. Cradock, and many others, think it was the *former*. After all, it seems to me something *uncertain;* as well as the particular *time* when this *epistle* was written, and the *place* from whence it was sent. (See *Introd.* to this *epistle*, p. 44.)

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. iv. LET the remembrance of the *irregularities* with which we ourselves were once chargeable, of that sinful and miserable condition in which we once were, make us *candid* to others, and silence our too severe *censures* against them. And let us rather, with the *apostle*, humbly adore that *grace* which has now made a difference between us and those that are still *foolish* and *disobedient*, *wandering* in the paths of vice, and *enslaved to divers lusts and passions.* Let the *kindness*, the *philanthropy of God*, be daily celebrated and adored by us; *of God, who hath saved us, not by the righteousness of our works*, but by *his own rich* and overflowing *mercy; hath justified us by his* free grace, in *Christ*, and thereby *made us heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.* Nor let us ever forget how much we are indebted to the *regenerating and renewing influences of the Holy Ghost, shed abroad upon us richly by Jesus Christ our Saviour.* May it wash and purify our souls more and more from every stain of sin, and may it inspire us with a pious ardour to honour our profession, by *distinguishing ourselves in all good works for necessary uses*, and according to the calls which Providence gives us in life. Having professed our *belief in God*, let us carefully practise all the virtues of the *Christian* character; *for these things are* indeed *good* and *profitable to men.* But let us guard against those airy curiosities and abstruse speculations, which on the contrary, are *unprofitable and vain:*

Ver. 2 3 4 5 7 6 14 8 9

May all the *churches of Christ* be delivered from such factious members and teachers as would depart from the *infallible* rule of truth which is laid down in the word of God, and would *subvert the faith once delivered to the saints;* introducing, instead of it, *the doctrines of men*, and teaching things which tend to alienate the minds of Christians from the gospel, and from each other, that they may set up their own authority, and promote their own secular interest. We ought undoubtedly to be *cautious* how we pass such a censure on *particular* persons, without clear and evident proofs; but when such proofs arise, and the persons in question appear to be the *turbulent and pernicious heretics* that *St. Paul* describes, it were to be wished they might always meet with the treatment which he recommends. They ought first to be plainly and seriously *admonished;* and, if *repeated* admonitions are rejected, it is the duty of the wiser and sounder parts of Christian societies to *expel* them; that they may be less capable

10

of

of doing mischief, and that the *gangrene* of such pernicious principles and dispositions may not spread, to the disgrace and ruin of the *churches* to which they belong. But let it ever be remembered, that *this* is *all* the remedy which *scripture* furnishes us with; and they, who to the solemn censure of disturbed and injured *churches*, add any *corporal* severities, or *civil* penalties whatsoever, are taking up weapons which *Christ* has never put into their hands, and may very probably do *more* mischief in the church and the world than the most erroneous of those against whom they would arm their terrors. SECT. IV.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

PHILEMON.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

VOL X.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON was an inhabitant of Colosse, as we may conclude from St. Paul's mentioning Onesimus, in his epistle to the Colossians, as *one of them* (chap. iv. 9); as well as from his saluting Archippus in *this* epistle (ver. 2), who appears, from Col. iv. 17, to have been a *pastor* of *that* church. The title of *fellow-labourer*, given Philemon (ver. 1), makes it probable, that he was his *colleague* in the *ministry:* and, though we cannot *certainly* determine when he first embraced Christianity, it is evident, from the oblique insinuation in the 19th verse, that he was one of the *apostle's* converts; and it is not at all unlikely (as some have conjectured) that he might have had an opportunity of attending upon him during his long residence at Ephesus, where we are told St. Paul preached with so much success, that *all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus Christ:* (Acts xix. 10.)—He seems, from several hints given in the *epistle*, to have been a person of *distinction;* particularly, from the mention made of *the church in his house* (ver. 2), and his liberal contribution to the relief of the saints (ver. 5, 7); and the general strain of the letter shews that the *apostle* held him in very high esteem, and looked upon him as one of the great supports of religion in that society.

It appears from the first verse of this epistle, that *St. Paul* was under *confinement* when he wrote it; and, as he expresses (ver. 22) his expectation of being shortly released, it is probable that it was written towards the close of his *first imprisonment* at Rome, and sent, together with the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus, about *the year of our Lord* 63, or the 9th of the emperor Nero. (Compare *Introduction* to Ephes. Vol. IX. p. 315, and Vol. VIII. § 60, *note* z.)

The occasion of the letter was this:—Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had robbed his master, and fled to Rome; where, happily for him, he met with the *apostle*, who was at that time a prisoner at large, and by his instructions and admonitions was converted to Christianity, and reclaimed to a sense of his duty. St. Paul seems to have kept him for some considerable time under his eye, that he might be satisfied of the reality of the change; and, when he had made a sufficient trial of him, and found that his behaviour was entirely agreeable to his profession, he would not detain him any longer for his own private convenience, though in a situation that rendered such an assistant peculiarly desirable (compare ver. 13, 14), but sent him back to his master; and, as a mark of his esteem, entrusted him, together with Tychicus, with the charge of delivering his *epistle* to the church at Colosse, and giving them a particular account of the state of things at Rome, recommending him to them, at the same time, as *a faithful and beloved brother*; (Col. iv. 9.)—And, as Philemon might well be supposed to be strongly prejudiced against one who had left his service in so infamous a manner, he sends him *this letter*, in which he employs all his influence to remove his suspicions, and reconcile him to the thoughts of taking Onesimus into his family again. And whereas St. Paul might have exerted that *authority* which his character as an *apostle*, and the relation in which he stood to Philemon as a *spiritual father*, would naturally give him, he chooses to *entreat* him as a *friend*, and with the softest and most insinuating address urges his suit, conjuring him, by all the ties of Christian friendship, that he would not deny him his request. And, the more effectually to prevail upon him, he represents his *own* peace and happiness as deeply interested in the event: and speaks of Onesimus in such terms as were best adapted to soften his prejudices, and dispose him to receive one who was so dear to *himself*, not merely as a *servant*, but as a *fellow Christian* and a *friend*.

But though the *apostle's subject* did not lead him to treat so *directly* of the doctrines or precepts of Christianity in *this* as in his other epistles, yet a person, whose mind, like *his*, was so deeply and habitually impressed with a sense of Divine truths, could not fail, even when writing upon the most *common and familiar* occurrences, to introduce some hints that might tend to cherish pious and virtuous sentiments in the breast of his friend; and accordingly, in *this short* epistle, we meet with several allusions to different parts of *the Christain plan*, *interwoven* in so *easy and natural* a manner with the rest of the letter, as must convince us how near those subjects lay to his heart.

It is impossible to read over this admirable epistle, without being touched with *the delicacy of sentiment*, and the *masterly address* that appear in every part of it. We see here, in a most striking light, how perfectly consistent *true politeness is*, not only with all the warmth and sincerity of *the friend*, but even with the dignity of the Christian and the apostle. And if this letter were

to

to be considered in no other view than as a mere human composition, it must be allowed a master-piece in its kind. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to compare it with an epistle of Pliny, that seems to have been written upon a similiar occasion, (lib. ix. let. 21 ;) which, though penned by one that was reckoned to *excel* in the *epistolary* style, and though it has undoubtedly many beauties, yet must be acknowledged, by every impartial reader, vastly *inferior* to this animated composition of the *apostle.*

One cannot but be solicitous to know what *effect such* an epistle produced. One would willingly hope it was attended with all the success which St. Paul seemed to expect, when he tells Philemon, that he wrote to him in full *confidence of his obedience knowing that he would do even more than he said.* And though nothing indeed is *expressly* asserted in relation to it, yet there is great reason to believe, from the nature of the thing, that Onesimus had *already* waited upon his master, and being received into favour, when he discharged the commission, with which (as we have observed) he was honoured, to the Colossians. For it is hardly to be imagined, that *the apostle* would direct him to join with Tychicus, in delivering such a message to a church, that was in part under the care of Philemon, before he had made his submission to him, and obtained his pardon. (Compare the *Introduction* to the *Ephesians*, p. 315.)

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

PHILEMON.

SECT. I.

Paul intending to intercede with Philemon, in favour of his fugitive servant Onesimus, introduces his design with a most affectionate and proper salutation. Philem. ver. 1—7.

PHILEMON 1.

PAUL, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow-labourer.

PHILEMON 1.

PAUL, *a* well-known *prisoner* in the cause *of Christ Jesus, and Timothy a brother*, not unknown, join their salutations *to Philemon our beloved* friend, *and* pious *fellow-labourer* in the work and gospel of our blessed Redeemer, and one of the pastors of the Colossian church: *And* we also address them *to the beloved Apphia* [a], his pious consort, *and to* his associate in the ministry, *Archippus*, (Col. iv. 17,) *our fellow-soldier* in that holy warfare in which we are engaged; *and to the* little *church* of Christians [*that is*] *in thine house*, as we know thou art so happy as to have several of thy numerous family united to thee and to us, in the bonds of the Lord. May *grace and peace*, that abundance of spiritual blessings, and that happiness resulting

SECT. I.

Phil. 1.

2 And to *our* beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house;

2

3 Grace to you, and peace

3

a *To the beloved Apphia.*] It has been observed, that this *lady* and Archippus are probably named in a view of engaging their good offices with Philemon, in favour of Onesimus; and no doubt Paul would wish they might be engaged: but, *separate* from that view, it would have been *natural and decent* to mention them *both*.

b *Of*

SECT. i.

Phil. 1. 3.

ing from them, which we so often wish to our Christian friends, when we are addressing them by letter, [*be*] *unto you from God our* gracious and bountiful *Father, and* from *the Lord Jesus Christ*, to whose intercession we owe our interest in the Divine favour.

peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 You may be sure, my dear Philemon, that though absent from you, and surrounded with many cares and sorrows, yet far from being unmindful of you in my addresses to the throne of grace, *I always thank my God* on your account, when I am *making mention of thee in my prayers; Hearing*, with greater pleasure than I can express, *of the* steady *faith which thou hast*, and always maintainest, *towards the Lord Jesus* Christ, as the great object to which our faith as Christians is directed, *and of thy* ardent *love to all the saints*[b], who are the excellent of the earth, and the most deserving our esteem and affection. It is therefore matter of my most fervent prayer that these promising openings may be abundantly answered; and *that thy communion* with us *in the faith* of our blessed Redeemer, the advantages of which thou doest now so happily share, *may be* more and more apparently *efficacious in* extorting from all that behold it *the* due *acknowledgment of every good* and valuable *thing which is in you* all *towards Christ Jesus*, and all those whom he is pleased to own and favour. Permit me to say this, in my own name, and that of my companion Timothy; *for we are* ourselves *greatly rejoiced and comforted by thy love*, which thou art in so many generous ways expressing to our fellow Christians; and particularly, *that the bowels of the* poor *saints are refreshed by thee* our dear *brother*, while thou feedest and relievest the poor, and makest those possessions which Providence hath given thee, a general good. None of the hungry that are fed at thy table can find a supply of their necessities more sensible and delightful than the joy we feel, from the report of so beneficient a conduct in one whom we so tenderly regard.

4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers;

5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing, which is in you in Christ Jesus.

7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

IMPROVE-

b *Of the faith which thou hast towards the Lord Jesus, and of thy love to all the saints.*] The words in the *original* stand as they are placed in our *version*, and many instances of such a *transposition* are produced by Dr. Whitby, in his learned note on this place; but Mr. Blackwall observes, that *our language* does not admit of the like, and therefore proposes the rendering we have followed. *Blackwall's Sac. Class.* Vol. I. p. 87.

IMPROVEMENT.

If any could be so weak as to think the character of the *Christian* and *the minister*, at all inconsistent with that of *the well-bred man*, they must see a remarkable demonstration to the contrary in this *familiar epistle of St. Paul* to his friend *Philemon*; which is conducted with the happiest *address*, and which, *in true politeness*, may vie with that of the greatest masters of the *epistolary* style in antiquity. The Introduction (the length of which obliges us to separate it from the remainder to which it is so happily connected) leads us naturally to a variety of useful remarks, and conveys important *instruction in the vehicle* of well-deserved *praise*. How elevated soever the station of *Philemon* might be, and how Ver. 5
plentiful soever his circumstances, it was his chief glory and felicity to be so distinguished for *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and *love to all the saints*. And indeed it is most unworthy the profession we make of *faith in Christ*, as the great Head of the church, not to love all his members; unworthy our character *of saints*, not to feel a *sympathetic* affection for all that are *sanctified*. If others are deficient here, as alas! many are too sadly deficient, let us exert ourselves so much the more, and labour to give the most substantial demonstrations of our love. It will be an honour *to us*, 6
and *to the Christian name*, *that our communion in this* precious *faith* should extort an *acknowledgment of good things in us*, from all who are intimately acquainted and conversant with us. Thus shall we diffuse happiness in a wide circle; for it is a sincere *joy* to all good men, *to behold* the graces and the usefulness of *others*. Especially are the hearts of faithful and zealous *ministers comforted*, when 7
the bowels of poor saints are refreshed, by the liberality of the rich. They share alternately the pleasure which is felt on the side of the pious *benefactors* and their grateful *beneficiaries*; and were they with *Paul*, in the confinement and necessities of a *prison*, *the report*, would delight and enlarge their souls.

SECT. II.

The Apostle proceeds to the main business of this short epistle; and labours, by the happiest address that can be imagined, to engage Philemon kindly to receive and forgive Onesimus, his fugitive slave, who after having greatly injured his master, and happily been converted by St. Paul at Rome. He concludes with some particular salutations and messages. Philem. ver. 8, *to the end.*

PHILEM. 8. PHILEMON 8.

WHEREFORE; though I might be I HAVE been expressing, my dear Philemon, the confidence I have in your excellent character, SECT. ii. Phil. 8.

SECT. ii.

character, and the great pleasure with which, both I and Timothy my brother have heard
Phil. 8. of your many generous and beneficent actions; and *therefore*, in reference to the particular occasion of this letter, which to so good a heart cannot be disagreeable, *though I might take great freedom, in* virtue of my relation to *Christ*, and the authority he has given me *to* prescribe, and *enjoin that which* it [*is*] *proper* and reason-
9 able *for thee* to do, *I rather* choose *by love* to *entreat* [*thee*], *being such an one as Paul the aged*[a]; whose superior standing in life and in religion I know thou wouldst revere, though in a private station, *and* especially as I am *now also the prisoner of Jesus Christ*, whom thou wouldst, I am sure, honour, as a confessor in his cause, if I were not distinguished by so immediate a commission from him, or so long a
10 train of services in his church. *I entreat thee*, I say, *concerning a* certain *son of mine, whom I have begotten* to Christ *in my bonds*[b]; and whom I hope thou wilt upon that account be inclined to favour, knowing how dear he must be to me, considered as a soul which God hath given me at such a season as this. And it is no
11 other than thy servant *Onesimus; Who* indeed, if I may so allude to his name, did not formerly answer it, for he *was once unprofitable to thee*, negligent of thy business, and so conscious of having deserved thy displeasure, that he fled from it. *But* he *now* is, and I trust will be, *profitable* both *to thee and to me*[c], so as daily

be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which is convenient;

9 Yet for love's sake, I rather beseech *thee*, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

a *Paul the aged.*] It is generally agreed, that this *epistle* was written about the *year of Christ* 63; and, if we suppose Paul to have been 24 *years* old when Stephen was stoned (which is consistent with his being called a *young* man), that being *about* the *year* 34 (for we have not *data* sufficient absolutely to determine the *exact* time), he would now be 53; and considering how much his constitution would probably be impaired, by his *fatigues* and *sufferings*, before that time, he might properly enough call himself, πρεσβύτης, *one advanced in age*, though not an old man. Dr. Whitby indeed says, we are *young* till 40, and not properly *aged* till after 60, and concludes he might be about 34 at the death of Stephen, and 63 at the *date* of this *epistle*. If the reader be not satisfied with *either* of these conjectures, he may take any *medium* between them that shall appear to him more plausible.

b *A son of mine, whom I have begotten in my bonds,—Onesimus.*] Thus the words stand in the *original*; and I thought it incumbent upon me to preserve that *order*, because it keeps the mind in an agreeable *suspence*, and has a fine effect, which every *reader* of taste will quickly perceive.

c *Was unprofitable, but now is profitable.*] It has been justly observed, that it was strange, Onesimus, who had been so wicked, in the *pious* family of Philemon, amidst all the religious opportunities he enjoyed there, should meet with *conversion* in his rambles at Rome. Instances have often happened somewhat of a similar nature; but it is very *unjustifiable*, and may probably be *fatal*, for any to *presume* on the like extraordinary interpositions of providence and grace in their favour.—The word *Onesimus* is pretty generally known to signify *profit*, and *Onesiphorus* is much of the same import. They were names which might

daily to give increasing satisfaction to us both: SECT. ii.
Whom, how agreeable and useful soever he might have been to me here, *I have sent* back to thee *again*. *Do thou therefore receive* him with readiness and affection. Receive *him*, did I say? nay rather receive, *as it were*, *my own bowels:* a person whom I so tenderly love, that he may seem, as it were, to carry the heart of Paul along with him whithersoever he goes. *Whom* indeed *I was desirous to have kept near me, that he might* have officiated for thee, and *in thy stead have attended upon me in the bonds* I suffer for the sake *of the gospel:* for I do thee O Philemon, the justice to believe, thou wouldst have found a pious pleasure, in every ministration of this kind, if thou wert near me. *But I would do nothing* in this affair *without thy* express *consent, that thy benefit might not seem to be* extorted *by necessity, but* appear a *voluntary* act. I therefore return him to thee by the first opportunity; *for perhaps he was separated from thee for a while,* by the permission of Providence, *to this* very *end, that thou mightest* receive and *enjoy him for ever;* that he might not only be dear and useful to thee, during all the remainder of his life, as a servant, whose ear is as it were, bored to the door of thine house (to allude to the Hebrew custom, Exod. xxi. 6.), but that he might indeed be a source of eternal delight to thee, in that infinitely better world, where all distinctions between masters and their slaves shall cease, even that world of complete liberty and everlasting friendship.

Phil. 12.

12 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:

13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel.

14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

15 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever;

16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?

In the mean time receive him, *not now as a* fugitive slave, to be long frowned upon, and kept at a distance, for his former faults; nor treat him merely as a common *servant, but* as *above a servant,* as standing in another, a much more dear and honourable relation, *a beloved brother, especially to me,* as having been for some time a very useful attendant upon me in my afflictions; *but how much more* so *to thee,* to whom he belongs *both in the flesh and in the Lord,* as thou hast so long known him, and wilt have the pleasure of discerning more particularly how happy a change Christianity hath made in his temper

might perhaps be given to *slaves* by way of *good omen,* expressing an expectation, that they would bring *advantage* to their masters; and it is very evident, that Paul refers to the *etymology* of the word.

SECT. ii.

temper and character. *If therefore thou esteemest me* as a friend and *a companion*[d] in Christ, I beseech thee to *receive him*, even *as* thou wouldst receive *myself*, if I could have the satisfaction of making thee a visit in person.

Phil. 17.

17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 *If he have injured thee in any* pecuniary *matter, or is indebted* [*to thee*], in consequence of any former extravagancies and follies (of which divine grace hath now, I hope, made him truly sensible), so far as it has been the case, *charge it to my account.*

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account;

19 *I Paul have written* [*it*] *with my own hand*, and do hereby, as it were, give thee legal security for it; *I will pay it again* upon demand, as far as my little substance will go. *Not to say to thee, that* as I was the happy instrument of thy conversion to Christ, *thou owest even thine own self unto me.* We will put that quite out of the question, and if thou pleasest to require it, I will really charge myself as thy debtor, and take the first opportunity of making

19 I Paul have written *it* with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

20 thee a remittance. *Yes*, [*my*] dear *brother*, let me prevail upon thee in this request, *let me have joy of thee in the Lord;* and while thou art so ready to do good to others, and to communicate for their comfort, out of those stores which Providence has so graciously given thee, let me beseech thee to *refresh my bowels*[e] *in the Lord;* for the Christian consolation, which it will afford me, to see thee and Onesimus happy in each other, will be better, and more delightful, than food to the hungry.

20 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

21 But I will not urge the matter farther; *I have written to thee, in* full *confidence of thy* ready *obedience* and deference to my request, and indeed, as *knowing that thou wilt do even more than I say;* thou wilt not think of insisting upon the exact balance of former accounts, but wilt readily embrace this thy returning servant in

21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

d *Esteemest me a companion.*] L'Enfant translates it, "I conjure thee therefore, by all that is common between us, receive him as myself," in imitation of Theodoret, who was no doubt an excellent *commentator.* But the main thought which prevailed in the *apostle's* mind seems to have been the *participation* they both had in the *blessings of the gospel*, which was the dearest bond of their friendship.

e *Refresh my bowels.*] The word αναπαυσον is wonderfully *emphatical.* It literally signifies to *appease*, or *quiet;* which strongly intimates the *commotion* he felt, through the ardour of his concern for Onesimus: and seems to represent the *eagerness* of his desire for his re-establishment in Philemon's family, by the appetite of *hunger.* Incapable, as in many other places, of expressing this in the *version*, I have attempted it, though by no means with equal spirit, in the *paraphrase.* Compare ver. 7, where the same word is used, and seems to be referred to here with peculiar beauty and propriety.

f *Prepare*

SECT. ii.

in the arms of paternal love. At the same time I must *also* desire thee to *prepare a lodging for me*[f], *for*, though I am as yet a prisoner, Phil. 22.
I hope that I shall, ere long, *through your prayers, be granted to you;* and, if Providence set me at liberty again, I intend to visit your parts, and shall, if it be convenient, cast myself on the known hospitality of your family. In the 23
mean while, accept the greeting of our Christian brethren here at Rome, and let me particularly tell thee that *Epaphras, my fellow captive in Christ Jesus, salutes thee:* As [*also*] 24
Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and *Luke, my fellow-labourers*, who are cordially engaged with me in the service of the gospel, and take a peculiar pleasure in lending that assistance to the churches in Rome which my confinement will not conveniently admit me to impart. I con- 25
clude with the best wish which the most endearing Christian friendship can form: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* ever [*be*] *with your spirit*, and shed abroad on thee, and all thy companions in him, that peace and happiness which nothing but the communications of his favour can give. *Amen.*

22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus.

24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.

25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit.—— Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

How amiable is the *condescension* of the holy *apostle!* how charming and delicate his *address* in this whole *section!* which makes the immediate *occasion* of this letter, minute as it may seem, Ver.
matter of congratulation to the *Christian world. St. Paul* lays 8, 9
aside the authority, which his *office*, his *age*, his *sufferings*, gave him, to address *Philemon*, as on a foot of *equal* friendship, choosing rather, *by love to entreat.* Let the example be imitated by those in superior stations and relations of life; and let them learn likewise, from the tenderness which *such a man* expresses about this poor *slave*, in whom he traced the appearance of a truly Christian temper, to interest themselves in the happiness of those whose rank is far beneath their own; and learn to make the situation of their *servants* easy, by a kind and friendly treatment. Well may such 16
a care be expected, especially when we can look on such as *brethren, beloved in the Lord*, and partakers with us in the same Saviour and hope.

Let

[f] *Prepare a lodging for me.*] Theodoret justly observes, that Paul's mentioning his purpose of coming to lodge with Philemon quickly, would naturally add *greater* weight to his interposition in favour of Onesimus.

SECT. ii. Let those, to whom God hath blessed the labours of his faithful *ministers*, as the means of their conversion, remember it with
Ver. pleasure, and ascribe it to the riches of Divine grace, to which all is originally to be traced; remembering also, that there is a sense in which they *owe even themselves* to those who have been honour-
19 ed as the *instruments* of bringing them to *Christ*, without an acquaintance with whom they had lost *themselves*, and been ruined for ever. Let the kindness which *Paul* expresses for *Onesimus*, in
18 being willing that his *debt* to *Philemon* should be *charged to his*
18, 19 *account*, lead us to reflect on our infinite obligations to a gracious *Redeemer*. He has suffered our ten thousand talents to be *imputed* to him, that *his righteousness* might be so imputed to us, that, for the sake of it, we should finally be re-admitted to the *family of God*. With an ingratitude not to be paralleled, by any thing which can pass between mortal men, we had perfidiously deserted
15 it; but the Divine goodness leaves us room humbly to hope, we may have *departed from it for a while, to be received* into it *for ever*. *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit*, to produce those strong impressions of wonder, thankfulness, and love,
25 which ought to fill it, in every remembrance of such overflowing and triumphant mercy! *Amen*.

END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO THE

HEBREWS.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE READER, BY THE EDITOR.

THE *Author* of this work had written upon the title of that manuscript-volume, which contained the epistle to the Romans, the following direction: "*N. B.* If I die before this work is finished, as it is most probable I shall, I desire that it may be transcribed, as far as it goes, by Mr. Orton; and that he would add such notes as he shall judge most proper, from my written critical notes on the epistles; and that it may be printed, by subscription, in one, two, or three volumes, as shall be judged most convenient, and according to the progress which Providence may permit me to make in it. *Jan.* 1, 1746-7."—I think it therefore incumbent upon me to inform the subscribers what progress the *author* had made in this work, and what has been done to it since his death in order to remove those suspicions which often arise concerning the authenticity of posthumous works.

When it pleased God to put a period to the *author's* life and labours, he had finished his paraphrase and improvement of the epistolary part of the New Testament, and of the book of the *Revelation*, and fairly wrote it out in short-hand; and had added the principal notes which he intended to publish. At the end of the manuscript-volume containing the *Revelation*, he had wrote, "Through the good hand of God upon me, which I desire most thankfully to acknowledge, I ended the first copy of the *Family Expositor*, Dec. 31, 1748, exactly two years after I began to write upon the *Romans*; having pursued it, during that time, without the interruption of one single day; such health and such resolution did it please God to give me, amidst the various scenes of business, danger, and amusement, through which I passed! May his grace raise to himself a monument of praise from this feeble effort to explain, illustrate, and enforce his word!"—And under—"I ended my notes on the books I had thus paraphrased and improved, *Aug.* 21, 1749, having daily pursued the work in like manner, whether at home or abroad."—He had transcribed for the press, the paraphrase, improvements, and notes, of the two first volumes, as now published; the paraphrase and improvements of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, and the two first epistles of *John*.—The notes on these three epistles, together with the paraphrase, improvements, and notes, on the remaining epistles, and the *Revelation*, were transcribed from his short-hand copy, by my own hand, or under my inspection, by some of his pupils; and I carefully revised the transcript several times, and compared it with his short-hand copy.—I can assure the subscribers, that the utmost caution has been used, that no one sentiment of the *author* should be suppressed or changed, and only such expressions varied, as to avoid tautology, and for the sake of prespicuity and accuracy, it might be presumed the author would have varied, had he transcribed this part of

the work, and given it his finishing hand. In the margin of the short-hand copy, he had wrote hints of some alterations to be made in the phraseology and length of some sentences, as well as of notes he intended to add when he transcribed it for the press. I have endeavoured to follow these hints in the best manner I could; and accordingly a few notes have been added to vindicate or illustrate his version or paraphrase, and references inserted to other critics; most of which were taken from his notes, according to the directions mentioned above. On the whole, I hope the attentive reader, who is acquainted with his style and spirit, will discover nothing in the latter part of the work unsuitable to either; and will join with me in thankfulness to God, who spared his life till he had completed this important and useful undertaking.

There is one occurrence relating to it, which my own judgment, and that of many of the *author's* friends, forbid me to conceal, and the rather, because it has been greatly misrepresented. During the *author's* life) in *June* 1750) a fire occasioned by a wax-candle being left on his writing-desk, broke out in his study, and consumed many of his papers, and part of one volume of the short-hand copy of this work; but the light of the fire being providentially discovered by an opposite neighbour, who gave an immediate alarm, it was speedily extinguished. When the author was informed of this accident, he seemed most anxious about the preservation of this manuscript; and when the flames were extinguished, to his great joy and surprise, it appeared that the part of this volume, and that only which was destroyed, had been transcribed, and the transcript lay in another place out of danger, and all the untranscribed pages were perfectly legible, and only the edges of them singed. Being an eye-witness of the danger and deliverance, I record this account of it, partly for the satisfaction of the subscribers with regard to the exaggerated report, but chiefly as it seems to denote a particular care of Providence in preserving this work, and a favourable omen, that God intends it for extensive and lasting usefulness. *Whoso is wise, and will observe* such *things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* Psalm cvii. 43.

In the name of the *author's family*, I heartily thank the subscribers for their encouragement of this work, and the gentlemen who have kindly superintended the press; and I pray that it may answer those pious and benevolent ends for which it was composed and is now published.

J. ORTON.

Salop, Nov. 21, 1755.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

LEARNED men have been divided in their opinions concerning the *author* of this celebrated epistle. It hath been ascribed to St. Luke, to Barnabas, and to *Clement of Rome.* But though some considerable persons have given the sanction of their authority to the several opinions I have mentioned, yet the most prevailing one among the ancients was, and among the moderns still is, that *this epistle* is a genuine work of St. Paul. Among those who believe that St. Paul was its author, there are some indeed who imagine it was written by him in the Hebrew or Syriac language, and translated into Greek either by St. Luke or Clement. And it is certain there was such an ancient tradition, mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and Jerom. And there are arguments in support of all the particular hypotheses concerning the author of the epistle, the language in which it was originally written, and the person who translated it into Greek; I say, there are various arguments in favour of all these different opinions, taken from similarity of style, the use of particular words, and the manner of composition. But I apprehend, whoever carefully considers the observations that have been made by very learned men, upon the language of St. Paul, of Luke, or Clement, in defence of their respective hypotheses, will conclude, that such arguments are very little to be depended upon, as they frequently are much indebted to a strong imagination, and in the present case, appear to be urged with equal plausibility on all sides.

I have already given my opinion, that St. Paul was the *author* of *this epistle*, (Vol. VIII. sect. 60. *note* [g];) and that because the current of antiquity, though not the authority of every individual father, runs strongly this way; Jerom expressly asserts, that the *epistle* to the Hebrews had been received as St. Paul's by *all the*

Greek writers. And though this epistle wants one characteristic of St. Paul's other epistles, the prefixing his name, and his usual form of inscription; for a very obvious reason, that he might not too early awaken the prejudices the Jewish converts had conceived against him; yet it might be easy to collect from the *epistle itself;* some strong intimations that St. Paul was its *author.*

It is of less importance in what *language* it was originally written, if the translation were made, (as the tradition says,) by some companion and fellow-labourer of St. Paul. Though it should be considered, that the presumption lies on the side of our present *Greek copy*, that it is an original, and not a translation; and therefore the arguments which induce any to be of a contrary opinion, should be very strong and convincing. If the reader should be inclined to examine this matter more accurately, he may consult Spanheim's Dissertation concerning the *author of the epistle to the Hebrews*, particularly part iii. chap. 2, concerning the *language* *; and the learned *Mr. Hallet's Introduction to his Supplement to Mr. Pierce's Paraphrase;* which Mr. Wolfius hath translated into *Latin*, and published at the close of the 4th volume of his *Curæ Philologicæ*, with some of his own remarks and strictures in the margin. As for the date of this epistle, I am of opinion it was about the year 63, while St. Paul was imprisoned at Rome, or quickly after it. See Vol. VIII. sect. ix. *note*[g], and compare Heb. xiii. 23.

This epistle was written to the Hebrews, or converts from Judaism to Christianity, who inhabited at least some *one particular country*, (as may be inferred from the *apostle's* saying, chap. xiii. 19, *I beseech you rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner;* and verse 13. *Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom if he come shortly, I will see you.)* And this country most probably was Judea, where the converts to Christianity from Judaism were almost incessantly persecuted by their unbelieving brethren, who tenaciously adhered to the constitution and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, which Christianity superseded. Now the manifest design of St. Paul in this epistle, is, "to confirm the Jewish Christians in the faith and practice of the gospel of Christ, which they might be in danger of deserting, either through the *insinuations* or *ill-treatment* of their persecutors."

It was natural for the zealous defenders of the Mosaic law to insist upon the Divine authority of Moses, the distinguishing glory and majesty which attended its first promulgation by the ministry of angels, and the special privileges with which it invested those who adhered to it. In answer to all *arguments* and *insinuations* of this kind, the *apostle* shews,

I. That in all these several articles, Christianity had an infinite superiority to the law. Which topic he pursues from chap. i. to xi. Reminding the believing Hebrews, That it was a most extraordinary

* *Fred. Spanheim. Op. Tom.* ii. p. 245, &c.

ordinary favour, that God had sent them a revelation by his *own Son*, whose glory was far superior to that of *angels*, (chap. i. *throughout;)* very naturally inferring from hence the danger of despising Christ on account of his *humiliation*, which in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him for wise and important reasons: particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God; (chap. ii. *throughout.*) With the same view he further magnifies Christ as superior to Moses their great legislator; and from the sentence passed on those who rebelled against the authority of Moses, infers the danger of despising the promises of the gospel; chap. iii. 1—13. And as it was natural from hence, to call to mind that rest in Canaan to which the authority wherewith Moses was invested was intended to lead them, the *apostle* cautions them against the sin of unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression, which he shows to refer to a nobler state of rest than what the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages: (chap. iii. 14.—iv. 21.) Further inforcing this caution by awful views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations of the character of Christ as our High Priest, of whose Divine appointment, gracious administration, and previous suffering, he goes on to discourse, and promises further illustrations of so important a topic; (chap. iv. 12, *to the end;* chap. v. *throughout.)* Declaring that he would advance to sublimer truths without dwelling upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from Christianity; and whose case he represents as very hopeless; (chap. vi. 1—9.) And then for the establishment and comfort of sincere believers, he sets before them the consideration of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to his sacred engagements, the performance of which is sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our Forerunner; (chap. vi. 9, *to the end.)* Further to illustrate the character of our blessed Lord, the Author and Finisher of our faith, he enters into a parallel between Melchizedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from instances in which the *priesthood* of Melchizedec excelled the *Levitical priesthood*, he infers the surpassing glory of the *priesthood* of Christ to the *priesthood* under the *law;* (chap. vii. 1—17.) From these premises, which plainly manifested the defects of the *Aaronical priesthood*, he argues, that it was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ, to which it was introductory and subservient; and by consequence, that the obligation of the law was henceforth dissolved; (chap. vii. 18, *to the end.)* He then recapitulates, what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High Priest of Christians, and further illustrates the distinguished excellence of that *new covenant* which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly inriched with much better promises than the *old:* (chap. viii. *throughout.)* Illustrating further the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the *Jewish high priest* did on the great day of *atonement;* (chap. ix.

ix. 1—14.) And having enlarged on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it, (chap. ix. 15, *to the end,)* and proved that *legal ceremonies* could not by any means purify the conscience, and from thence argued the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it, (chap. x. 1—15,) the *apostle* urges the Hebrews to improve the privileges which such an High Priest and covenant conferred on them, to the purpose of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and most benevolent regards to each other. (chap. x. 15—25.

The apostle having thus at length obviated the *insinuations* and *objections* of the Jews to the gospel of Christ, as inferior to the *Mosaic dispensation*, by showing its transcendent excellence in a clear and convincing light, for the satisfaction and establishment of the believing Hebrews, proceeds,

II. To awaken their attention, and fortify their minds against the storm of *persecution*, which had come, and was further likely to come upon them, for the sake of the Christian faith. To this end, he reminds them of the extremities they had already endured in defence of the gospel, and of the fatal consequences which would attend their apostacy; (chap. x. 26, *to the end.)* Calling to their remembrance the renowned examples of faith and fortitude which had been exhibited by holy men mentioned in the scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly by Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, (chap. xi. 1—16,) by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. (chap. xi. 17—29.) Concluding his discourse with glancing on many other illustrious worthies; and besides those recorded in scripture, referring also to the case of several who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. (chap. xi. 30.—xii. 2.)

And having thus executed his design in the *argumentative part* of the epistle, he *applies* the whole by exhorting the Hebrew Christians to sustain and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness, (chap. xii. 3—14.) Cautioning them against disparaging the blessings of the gospel, and making them a sacrifice either to any secular views or sensual gratifications; representing the incomparable excellence of these blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced, which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious and magnificent as it was, did by no means equal; (chap. xii. 15—29.) Exhorting them to brotherly affection, purity, compassion, dependence on the Divine care, steadfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man, from the consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ; which ought always to encourage us resolutely to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet with in his cause; (chap. xiii. 1—16.) Concluding the whole, with recommending to them some particular regard to their pious ministers; and intreating their prayers; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction. (chap. xiii. 17, *to the end.)*

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

THE HEBREWS.

SECT. I.

The Apostle reminds the Hebrews to whom he writes, of the great favour God had done them in sending them a revelation by his own Son; on whose glory he expatiates as far superior to that of angels, intending by this representation to engage them to embrace and retain the gospel. Heb. I. 1. *to the end.*

HEBREWS I. 1.

GOD, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

HEBREWS I. 1.

SECT. I.

THE great and wise *God*[a], *who* in his wonderful condescension *hath at many times, and in various manners*[b], *of old, spoken to the fathers* of the Jewish nation, *by the prophets* whom he hath in successive ages raised up and employed as the messengers of his will to them,

Heb. I. 1.

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his*

2 *In these last days* hath magnified his mercy in a yet more amazing manner; for he *hath spoken unto us by the Son*[c], his only-begotten, and best beloved

a *God who, &c.*] Though St. Paul was the author of this epistle, as we have already observed, yet he does not begin it, as he does most of his other epistles, by prefixing his name to it; the reason of which probably was, that those to whom he was now writing were under strong prejudices against his name; and he was not willing to alarm those prejudices at the beginning of his letter.

b *Many times, and various manners.*] The first word, as some apprehend, refers to the *parcels* by which God's will was delivered, in opposition to a *complete* revelation; and the last, to the *manner* in which it was made known, namely, by dreams, visions, urim, prophets, voices, signs.

c *By the son.*] This is no argument that God did not speak by Christ before; but only that it was not in so *clear* and *express* a manner.

d *Heir*

SECT. i.

beloved Son, whom he hath sent into our world as the Ambassador of his mercy to us, even that illustrious person, *whom he hath appointed the heir* and possessor *of all things*[d]. He hath adjusted all things in such a manner, as to advance the purposes of his glory, and committed the administration of his providential kingdom into his hands, *by whom*, and in reference to whose honour, *he also* created all things, and *constituted the ages*[e] and dispensations of the

Heb. I. 2.

his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 church and world. I speak of that great Emanuel, whom we have so long been taught to know and adore; *who being the effulgent ray of [his] glory, and the express delineation of his person*[f], on whom his likeness is instamped in living characters in a manner which no created nature can admit, *and upholding the universe* which he hath made *by the* efficacious *word of his* Father's *power*[g], which is ever resident in him, as his own, by virtue of that intimate though incomprehensible union which renders them one, John x. 30.); was nevertheless set forth in the feeble dress and humble form of human flesh, that he might be our atoning sacrifice. And accordingly *having by himself performed* that great transaction, which is *the cleansing away of our sins*, he is now returned to the celestial world from which he descended for this gracious purpose, and is *sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high*[h], of that glorious and excellent Being, who reigns supreme in the heaven of heavens.

3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 To this exalted Redeemer would I now call your thoughts, of whom I have some very important

4 Being made so much better than the angels,

d *Heir* and possessor.] Mr. Pierce learnedly vindicates the latter of these interpretations.

e *Constituted the ages.*] The sentiment, as thus expressed is a very important one; but if any insist upon rendering αιωνας, *the world itself*, I shall not oppose it; for it is certain, that St. Paul asserts this doctrine, Col. i. 15—17, if not here.

f *Delineation of his person.*] This is, saith Leigh, answering to the Divine perfections, as the impressions of the *wax* does to the engraving of the *seal*.—It is observable, that Philo calls the *Logos* χαρακλης και τυπων Θεου. See *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 559.

g *Word of his power.*] Many explain this of the *Father's* power, which is the sense I have given in the *paraphrase*. Some copies read αυτου, which would fully justify our version. But if the power of the Father be the power of Christ, to be used by him at pleasure for the security of his people, it seems to be all that the establishment of our faith in him requires.

h *Sat down on the right-hand.*] Some understand this of the *right-hand* of the *Shechinah*, in the most honourable place among men or angels; and quote 1 Pet. iii. 22; Eph. i. 20, 21; supposing there may be some glorious appearance of the *Father's* presence in heaven, as there was upon earth, which hath properly speaking a *right* or a *left-hand*. But this I esteem no article of faith. Compare chap. viii. 1.

i *Superior*

angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

portant and sublime truths to deliver. Consider, therefore, my brethren, what reverence, what fidelity, what zeal you owe to him *who was made* in exaltation and celestial glory *as much superior to angels*[i] *as the name he has inherited*, and by which through many succeeding ages he hath been spoken of in the sacred oracles, [*is*] *more excellent than theirs*; *For to* 5 *which of the angels hath he ever said*, as we know he hath said to the Messiah in that celebrated prophecy, (Psal. ii. 7.) *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*[k]*? And again*, (2 Sam. vii. 14.) *I will be a father to him, and he shall be my Son*[l]*?* For if these words were immediately spoken of Solomon, it was chiefly as a type of Christ, the great son of David, the Prince of peace. *But* so far is he 6 from speaking of the angels in terms expressing equal dignity, that *when he again introduces his first-begotten Son into the world*, and speaks of him as coming with royal pomp to take possession of his kingdom, *he saith*, (Psalm xcvii. 7.) *And let all the Angels of God worship him.* And accordingly he did actually demand their homage to him, as constituted their Lord and Sovereign, not only in regard to his originally superior glories, but in consideration of that fidelity and zeal with which he had discharged his important errand to our world. *And* 7 *concerning the angels he saith*, (Psal. civ. 4,) *he*

SECT. i.

Heb. I. 4.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his

i *Superior to angels.*] Some have, I think, very precariously imagined, that the *apostle*, in this and the next chapter, insists so much on Christ's superiority to angels, in order to take off the Jews from that *angel-worship* to which they were greatly inclined. But it is evident the *apostle* does not speak expressly on that subject. It is more certain, therefore, that his intention was to exalt their ideas of our blessed Redeemer; as indeed their entertaining high and honourable conceptions of him would be of great importance to their holding fast their Christian profession. It is plain the Jews considered the *angels* as concerned in the promulgation of their *law*, on which account they might be the more zealously attached to it, and in this view there was a peculiar propriety in the *apostle's* labouring the argument he is here upon, namely, the superiority of our blessed Lord to all the *angelic* orders.

k *Thou art my son.*] These words are taken from Psalm ii. 7. And I think it is evident (as others have observed,) that this and the rest of the passages here quoted, must refer to Christ in their original sense, and in the strictest propriety of interpretation; otherwise the argument would be entirely inconclusive; for it might be replied, that supposing these passages to be applicable to Christ, they will not prove him to be superior to the angels, since they originally refer to David and others confessedly inferior to those celestial spirits. It might be easily proved that this second psalm does originally belong to the Messiah. Compare Acts iv. 25, xiii. 33.

l *He shall be my son.*] Mr. Pierce hath laboured largely to prove, that these words can in their original and primary sense refer only to Christ.

m *He*

SECT. i

he maketh his angels winds [m], *and his ministers a flame of fire.* He, who rules the winds and the lightnings, has his angels under equal command, and employs them with the strength of winds and the rapidity of lightnings in his service.

his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

Heb. I. 7.

8 *But to the son* [*he*] speaks in a very different manner, and [*saith*] in those memorable words, which have an ultimate reference to Christ, (Psal. xlv. 6, 7, *Thy throne, O God* [n] [*is*] *for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom* [*is*] *a* 9 *sceptre of righteousness. Thou hast* in the most eminent degree, through the whole of thine administration, *loved righteousness and hated iniquity* [o], and hast taken the most effectual method to suppress it; *therefore God, thy God*, and Father, *hath anointed thee* plentifully *with the oil of gladness above thy associates* [p]: thou art exalted to superior honour and happiness; so that none of thy brethren, none of the angels whom thou mayest in any instance or degree have condescended to join with thyself, and lead in thy train, can pretend to compare with thee in glory or in joy. Yea, as Divine, thou art fixed in thine eternal throne, that the whole created world may unite its prostrate homage 10 before thee. *And* it is to him who presided, as is well known, over the Jewish nation and received the tribute of praise which they paid to Jehovah their God, that those words are addressed, Psal. cii. 26. *Thou, Lord, from the beginning*

8 But unto the Son, *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom:

9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

10 And thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens

m *He maketh his angels winds.*] That is, saith Mr. Cradock (*Apost. Hist.* p. 363) He, the son, makes use of the angels as his ministers, in producing storms and lightning according to his pleasure. But I would not change the signification of the pronoun. *He*, which returns here, without absolute necessity.——The rendering πνευματα *winds*, is very agreeable to the original and the context.

n *Thy throne, O God, &c.*] To render this, as some would do, *God is thy throne for ever and ever*, that is, God will establish thy throne, (according to 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14; Psalm. lxxxix. 4.) appears to me very unnatural.

o *Loved righteousness, hated iniquity.*] It may be objected, that, as all the *angels* have maintained this character, consequently *this* can be no just reason for preferring Christ to *them*. But I think the true answer is, not so much that the angels are chargeable with mistakes, though not with moral evil, Job iv. 18. xv. 15,) as Mr. Peirce suggests, but rather that it refers to that unparalleled instance of the love of moral rectitude which Christ hath given in becoming a sacrifice for sin by his atonement; doing more than hath been ever done by any rational agent, towards displaying his *love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity*.

p *Above thy associates*: μετοχοι.] It seems to be intimated here, that as Christ took the special charge of Judea, angels were charged with the government of *other* countries; in reference to which it is that they are called his *fellows* or *companions*; for (as others have observed) if *fellows* do not signify *angels*, the quotation is nothing to the *apostle's* purpose.

vens are the works of thine hands.

11 They shall perish but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

beginning hast founded the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They, permanent as they seem, *shall* at length *perish* and wear out; *but thou endurest* in undecaying glory; *yea all of them shall grow old like a garment. And as a mantle thou shalt fold them up*[q] *and they shall be changed:* thou shalt remove them out of their place, and introduce a new scene of things, with as much ease as a prince lays aside one robe and puts on another; *but thou art* ever *the same, and thy years shall not fail* through everlasting ages, nor can thy perfections admit any possible diminution.

But not to insist on the manner in which men have addressed their homage and their praises to him, even under the inspiration of an unerring spirit; let me refer you to another passage, in which the Father himself speaks to him under the character of his son, exalted to his mediatorial kingdom; that you may take an idea of his grandeur from thence. For *to which of the angels hath he ever said, Sit thou* enthroned in glory *at my right-hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet,* and give thee to trample upon the last and the proudest of them all? The spirits of heaven expect no such honour as this; the noblest of them all esteems himself happy in an opportunity of worshipping this triumphant Lord, and ministring even to the least of his servants. Is it not a known and delightful truth? *are they not* indeed *all ministring spirits,* who officiate before the throne of God, and are *sent out to attend on those who shall inherit salvation?* and always willing to undertake the offices he shall assign them, for the safety and good of his people? And therefore far from thinking of them in any view of comparison with him, let us humbly adore him, for the benefits which by his authority and favour we daily receive from these benevolent creatures.

SECT. i.

Heb. 1. 11.

12

13

14

IMPROVE.

q *Fold them up.*] For ελιξεις Mr. Pierce would read αλλαξεις, *change them,* agreeable to the Hebrews; and imagines that *heaven and earth* here signifies, *governments,* as indeed the phrase sometimes may; but I think not in this place.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. i.

LET us learn from this wonderful and delightful portion of scripture, how we are to conceive of our blessed *Redeemer*. Admirable contrast of characters! which might appear to our feeble *reason*, inconsistent, *if faith* did not teach us to reconcile them. Ver. 3 Strange, that the *brightness of his father's glory*, and *the express* 5 *image of his person by whom he made the worlds*, should condescend *by himself to purge our sins!* That he, to whom *God* 6 *saith, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee;* that he, *whom* 8 *the angels are commanded to worship;* that he, whose Divine *throne* 10 *is for ever and ever;* that he, whom the church hath for successive ages adored as having *founded the earth, and formed the heavens*, as in his original perfections and glories far more immuta- 11 ble than they, *changing them as a vesture* at his sovereign pleasure; that this great, this illustrious, this Divine person, should have laid aside these robes of celestial light to array himself in mortal flesh; not only that he might reveal his father's will, and speak to us in his name, but that he might *redeem us to God by his blood?* What shall we say? We will receive the message he brings us with all humble thankfulness; we will seek his favour with more earnest solicitude; we will congratulate his exaltation with loyal joy. O triumphant, transporting thought, that *Jesus* is enthroned above all heavens, that *he is anointed* with an unequalled effusion of *the oil of gladness:* with *angels* we will fall 9 down and worship him *as our Lord and our God. Our Hosan-* 3 *nahs* shall proclaim it, that he is *set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high*, and that God hath engaged to make *his ene-* 13 *mies his footstool.* Angels minister before him with unwearied 7 vigour, with inconceivable speed do they fly *like flames* of lightning from one end of the heaven to the other, from world to world, to execute his sacred commands. With delight do they *minister to those* whom he hath appointed *heirs of salvation*, nor do they neglect the *youngest or meanest.* Let us thankfully acknowledge the great *Redeemer's* goodness and care, in every kind office we receive from *them.* And as our obligations to him are infinitely superior to theirs, let us emulate their fidelity, vigour and zeal, in the steadiness and chearfulness of our obedience: till we join them in services like their own, in that world where they dwell, and to which, if we approve ourselves his faithful servants, he will ere long give them a charge safely and joyfully to convey us.

SECT.

SECT. II.

From what has been before said, the Apostle infers the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation; which in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him, for wise and important reasons; particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and encourage the freedom of our access to God. Heb. II. 1, *to the end.*

Hebrews II. 1.

THerefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, least at any time we should let *them* slip.

Hebrews II. 1.

SECT ii.

Heb. II. 1.

SOMETHING we have said in the former section concerning the supreme dignity of our blessed Redeemer. And now give me leave, before I proceed to other arguments which will naturally occur, to draw this obvious consequence from what I have already said: If he be so far superior to angels, *we ought therefore to yield extraordinary attention to the things which we have heard* [a] by his authority; *lest by any means we let* [*them*] *flow out* of our minds, and lose the impression they once made upon us.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward.

2 *For if the* Mosaic law, which was the *word spoken by angels* [b], proclaiming it in the name and presence of Jehovah from mount Sinai, *was stedfast, and* confirmed by such awful sanctions, that *every* instance of wilful *transgression and disobedience received, as its reward, a correspondent* and severe *vengeance;*

3 How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, *and* was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

3 *How shall we* have any room to hope that we shall *escape neglecting so great* and glorious *a salvation* as that which the gospel sets before us? A salvation, *which having at its beginning been spoken by the Lord* of angels himself, *was confirmed to us by* the certain report of *them that heard* [*him*]

4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles

4 preach it with his own lips; The blessed *God* himself *joining his* own Divine and sacred *testimony* with theirs, *both by* enabling them to perform the most amazing *signs and wonders* [c], *and*

a *We have heard.*] Nothing can be more evidently weak than the argument drawn from hence, to prove that St. Paul was not the author of this *epistle*, because it was not by *hearing* only that *he* received the *gospel*. It is to be considered, that he speaks in the name of *all* to whom he was writing, as well as his own, to render the instruction the more unexceptionable and the more forcible. Besides, that to *hear any thing*, signifies in general to be *instructed in it*.

b *Angels.*] See Dr. Whitby's admirable note on this *text*.

c *Signs and wonders.*] I think it is very needless to inquire curiously into the difference

SECT. ii. *and various* incontestible *miracles, and* endowing them in a rich abundance, with *distributions of the Holy Spirit* in its extraordinary operations, imparted in different degrees to different persons, *according to his own* sovereign *will* and pleasure.

Heb. II. 4.

cles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

5 And by these wonderful operations the superiority of Christ to angels is farther illustrated; *for to angels*, even the most exalted of them, *he*, that is, God *hath not subjected the world to come* [d] nor ever intended that they should preside in the latest and best dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, which extends not only to earth, but to heaven, *concerning which we* now *speak*, as it is the great business of the Author's life to promote its interests. 6 *But a certain* [*writer* [e]] well known I am persuaded to you Hebrews, *somewhere bears his testimony, saying*, Psal. viii. 4. O Lord, *what is man that thou rememberest him*

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man

ference of each of these words, when it is usual by a Hebraism to express a great degree and variety of things of any kind, by heaping together a great many *synonimous* words.

d *To angels he hath not subjected*, &c.] Archbishop Tillotson thinks the meaning of this scripture is, that God did not empower the angels who delivered the law, to enforce it with clear and express promises of a *future state*, as Christ had enforced the gospel. See his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 136. Dr. Barrow explains it of the Messiah making so great an alteration in the constitution of things, that it is represented *by a new heaven and a new earth*, (Isa. lxv. 17. *& sim.*) on which account it was called by the Jews, *the world to come*; a phrase which it is observable St. Paul only uses in *this epistle to the Hebrews* as being familiar to them. *Barrow's Works*, Vol. II. p. 202. Others have argued from this *text*, that *angels* were possessed of certain authority and power in the world before *Christ came*, of which they were divested upon his appearance; and of those who have agreed in this general explication, some, (as Mr. Pierce,) have referred the presidence of *angels* to their having the guardianship of *particular countries*, and others, to some particular influences of their counsels in projecting the schemes which preceded the display of the gospel. But it seems to me, that the simplest, plainest, and most unexceptionable sense is this, "That God had appointed his Son to preside in the last great dispensation; which he elsewhere expresses, by saying, *He has united all things under him, as their* common *Head*, Eph. i. 10." and this certainly is an honour to which no *angel* can pretend. Dr. Burnet's explication of this as referring to the new heavens and earth, which he supposes shall succeed the *conflagration* in which Christ is to reign, (which he also thinks referred to Isa. ix. 6.) is so very precarious and improbable an interpretation, that I think it is hardly worth mentioning. *Burnet's Theory of the Earth*, Vol. II. p. 392.

e *A certain writer* [*bears*] *his testimony.*] It has been matter of much debate among *critics*, whether these words are to be considered as in their *original* intent, a prophecy of the Messiah, or a description of the dignity and glory of *human nature*, to which the *apostle* alludes; making use of David's language to clothe his own ideas, though by an application very different from his design. It seems evident to me, that there is nothing in the viiith Psalm by which, independent upon the *apostle's* authority, it could be known to belong to the Messiah. On the whole therefore I prefer *the latter* opinion, though I readily confess, that if the former could be proved, it would establish a *direct* argument in words, which must otherwise be only understood as an *allusion*, but the grand truth to which they refer, the exaltation of Christ to supreme dignity, was so expressly asserted by himself, Mat. xxviii. 18, and was so fundamental a doctrine, and so universally received in the Christian church, that it did not seem to stand in need of such an additional proof.

f *For*

man that thou visitest him?

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that* is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

10 For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory,

him, or the son of man that thou regardest him! After which he goes on in words that have a most remarkable correspondence to the character and circumstances of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in his humbled and in his exalted state; for he adds, speaking of the Son of Man, *Thou hast made him* but *a little lower than the angels; with glory and honour hast thou crowned him, and hast constituted him* [*lord*] *over* all *the* visible *works of thine hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet.* This may be interpreted in the widest extent; *for in putting all things under him, nothing was left out,* [*which was*] *not* represented as *reduced to subjection to him. But now we do not as yet see,* that *all things* are *put under him,* to whom we refer these words; but on the contrary, a great part of the world is as yet unacquainted with him and his authority. *Nevertheless,* we see what we may well look upon as an earnest and security of it; for *we see Jesus, who,* for the few years he dwelt upon earth, *was made* in human form and state *a little lower than the angels* of God, over whom he had an original right, as their Maker, to preside, exalted to the most conspicuous dignity in the celestial world: we see him, who was thus humbled *for the suffering of death*[f], that he might be capable of it, and *that by the grace of God* to sinful creatures, *he might taste* the bitterness of *death for every man,* who would obediently accept of life through him, now *crowned with* a *glory and honour* far superior to what Adam had in the day in which he was created.

Such hath been the conduct of God in this great affair of our redemption. And the beauty and harmony of it will be apparent, in proportion to the degree in which it is examined. *For* though the Jews dream of a temporal Messiah, as a scheme conducive to the Divine glory, *it* well *became him*[g] *for whom* [*are*] *all things, and by whom* [*are*] *all things,* the glorious Being who is the first cause and the last end of all, *in* pursuit

SECT. ii.

Heb. ii. 7.

8

9

10

f *For the suffering of death*] These words may seem *ambiguous,* and capable of being referred either to the preceding or following clause. It is indeed true, that Christ was crowned as a *reward* for suffering death, as the Apostle expressly teaches, Phil. ii. 8, 9. But the concluding words of the verse, which have plainly a connection with these, determine them to the former sense.

g *It became him.*] This seems to signify, not only that the course that he took was well *worthy* of God, but that *in order* to act *worthy of himself,* it was expedient he should take *this* method.

h *Depose*

SECT. ii.

pursuit of the great and important design he had formed, of *conducting many* whom he is pleased to adopt as his *sons*, *to* the possession of that inheritance of *glory* he has intended for them, *to make* and constitute Jesus his first-begotten and best-beloved Son, *the Leader* and Prince *of their salvation*; and to make him *perfect* or completely fit for the full execution of his office, *by* a long train of various and extreme *sufferings*, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly consecrated to it.

glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Heb. II. 10.

11 *Now* in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, *the* great *Sanctifier*, who engages and consecrates men to the service of God, *and they who are sanctified*, that is, consecrated and introduced to God with such acceptance [*are*] *all of one* family; all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense, the seed of Abraham: *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them* whom he thus redeems and presents to Divine favour, his *brethren*; *Saying* (Psal. xxii. 22, 26.) in the person of David, when representing the Messiah in his sufferings and exaltation, *I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of* the assembly of thy people, the great assembly, which by way of eminence shall be called *the church*, *will I praise thee* for thy gracious interposition in my favour. *And again*, speaking as a mortal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in trials and difficulties as others were, he says in a psalm which represents his triumph over his enemies, *I will trust in him* as other good men have in all ages done; *and again*, elsewhere in the person of Isaiah, (Isa. viii. 18.) *Behold I and the children which* my *God hath given me*, are for signs and for wonders. *Seeing then* those whom he represents in one place and another as *the children* of the same family with himself, *are partakers of* human *flesh and blood*, *he himself in like manner participated of them*, and assumed all their sinless infirmities, *that* thereby becoming capable of those sufferings to which without such a union with flesh he could not have been obnoxious, *he might by* his own voluntary and meritorious *death*, abolish and *depose him*[h], *who*

11 For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.

12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold, I and the children which God hath given me.

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him

h *Depose him.*] The original word καταργησῃ, properly signifies to *deprive of all power*, Rom. vi. 6. When applied to the law, it signifies *abolition*. To suppose with Archbishop Tillotson, that it chiefly means, that Christ might give mankind the *hope* of immortality, when they actually saw *one risen* from the dead and ascending

him that had the power of death, that is, the devil:

who by Divine permission *had the empire of death*[i], and led it in his train, when it made its first invasion on mankind, *that is, the devil*, the great artificer of mischief and destruction; at the beginning the murderer of the human race, who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality which is his work, and who may often by God's righteous permission be the executioner of it. SECT. II. Heb. II. 14.

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.

But Christ the great Prince of mercy *and* life, graciously interposed, that he might *deliver those* his miserable captives, *who through fear of death were*, or justly might have been, *all their life-time obnoxious to bondage*; having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now changing their Lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life. 15

16 For verily he took not on him *the nature of* angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

We the sinful children of Adam, though the heirs of death, are thus delivered by him; but not the infernal powers, who were the first authors of their seduction; *for truly he took not hold of the angels*, to save them from plunging into the abyss of misery; *but he took hold of the seed of Abraham*, and hath made a gracious provision for the salvation of all who shall by true faith approve themselves the genuine children of that holy patriarch. 16

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest, in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people:

From whence, and in consequence of which design, *it behoved him to be made in all things like unto* those whom he condescends to call [*his*] *brethren, that* so *he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest*[k], *in things* [*relating*] *to God, that he might* in the most effectual manner *make atonement for the sins of the people*; which he could not have done if he had not assumed our nature. 17

18 For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able

But now, in consequence of that, he has not only provided himself with something to offer, but has by the experience of our infirmities, contracted that peculiar kind of compassion, which nothing else can teach; *and in that he hath himself suffered, being tempted* and tried with such a variety of assaults 18

ing to heaven, is, I think, sinking the interpretation a great deal too low.

i *The empire of death.*] Some have inferred from hence, that *the devil* is the *executioner* of the sentence of death both on good and bad men. But I think the sense in the *paraphrase* less obnoxious and precarious.

k *Faithful High-Priest.*] Mr. *Fleming* thinks πιστὸς signifies the same as ἀξιοπιστος, one *worthy of our trust* and confidence; but the former implies the latter, *Fleming's Chrystology*, vol. II. p. 266.

SECT. ii.

assaults and sorrows, *he can*, in the most ready and endearing, as well as effectual manner, *help those that are tempted*, and are making their way through those scenes of difficulty which he passed through with such fortitude and honour.

able to succour them that are tempted.

Heb. ii. 18.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18 ETERNAL praise to our *compassionate High-Priest*, who put on our *infirmities* that he might know how to pity and *relieve* them! Eternal praise to *him, by whom are all things and for whom are all things*, that he has concerted the merciful scheme of 10 *bringing many sons unto glory*, in a manner so well *worthy* of his Divine perfections, and so full of instruction and comfort to us; appointing his own Son *the Captain of our salvation*, and making him *perfect through sufferings!* Let us daily reflect upon it with 11 pleasure and gratitude, that he is *not ashamed to call* us *his brethren*, 16 though so highly exalted above the *angels of God;* and that *he took not hold of* the superior nature of *angels*, which was sunk into apostacy, guilt, and ruin, but *took hold on the seed of Abraham.* How venerable, as well as amiable, is that condescension with which he made himself a *little lower than the angels, that by the* 9 *grace of God* which was to owe its highest honours to his cross, *he might taste death for every man!* He hath effected his merciful purpose: *by death he hath deposed* and abolished the tyrannical *prince of death*, that is, *the devil*, and *delivered from the fears of death, those who*, had they known and considered their real circumstances, might have been continually *in bondage* to it.

We see our great enemy *deposed;* we see *life and immortality brought to light by his gospel:* let us see it with gratitude and pleasure. And let us learn from all, if we would not charge ourselves with the most inexcusable guilt, and the basest ingratitude, if we would not plunge ourselves into the lowest gulf of perdition, *not to neglect so great a salvation.* Let the doom, which the *law* 3 *of Moses* passed upon the presumptuous *transgressor*, deter us; and 2 let the grace of the gospel allure and invite us to attend to the 1 *salvation spoken by the Lord*, and to *take the most earnest heed* to it, *lest we let slip* that golden opportunity, which, if neglected, will never return.

SECT.

SECT. III.

The Apostle farther takes occasion to manifest Christ, as superior to Moses, the great legislator of the Jews; and begins to caution them from the sentence passed on the rebels against the authority of Moses, of the danger of despising the gospel promises. Heb. III. 1—13.

HEBREWS III. 1.

WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

SECT. iii.

Heb. III. 1.

HEBREWS III. 1.

I HAVE just pointed out to you the Son of God, under the endearing character of a compassionate and faithful High-Priest. And *therefore* suffer me to address you my dear and *holy brethren*, whom he hath brought near to God, and graciously made *partakers of the heavenly calling*[a], by which he animates his people to aspire to the noblest views and pursuits; and let me intreat you frequently to direct your eyes and hearts to him: *attentively regard* this gracious Saviour, who hath condescended to become *the apostle* of God to us, that he might bring us the messages of his will, *and* who is also constituted the *High-priest of our profession*[b], by whom our guilt is expiated, and our happiness secured even *Christ Jesus*, so well known to us under this great and honourable character. Let 2
that illustrious Person be daily familiar to your minds, even he *who was faithful to him that appointed him* to his office, *as Moses* [*was*] *also* faithful *for all his house*; according to that testimony with which God himself was pleased to honour him. (Numb. xii. 7.) But I design not by applying these words, to insinuate, that there is room for a complete comparison between them. On the contrary, it is very appa- 3
rent, that as *for* him of whom I now speak, *he was*

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more

a *Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.*] Mr. Pierce thinks, when they are called *holy brethren* by the *apostle*, it is in allusion to what was said of their *being sanctified*, chap. ii. 11. that when he speaks of their *calling*, he means their being *called his brethren*; and that when he stiles them *partakers of this calling*, it is to intimate that they do not *ingross* it. But all these interpretations seem to me more refined than solid. *The calling*, generally signifies *the call* that is given us by the *gospel* to pursue immortality and glory.

b *Apostle and High-Priest.*] Both are properly mentioned, as the *author* was to shew, that as an *apostle*, Christ was superior to Moses; and as an *High-Priest*, to Aaron. He is called an *Apostle* as sent from *God* with full commission for the important affair he came to transact. That *apostle* signifies *messenger*, see many places in the New Testament, cited vol. VII. sect. 162. p. 246. note e.

c *More*

SECT. iii.

Heb. III. 3.

was esteemed worthy of far *more honour than Moses* [c], *in proportion to the degree in which the builder of a house* [d] *hath more honour than the house* itself. For Christ laid the plan of the Mosaic dispensation, and Moses who was himself his creature, evidently acted as his delegate in the revelation which he made to the people of Israel; so that whatever excellencies that dispensation can boast, they reflect an honour ultimately on the Divine Person from whom he received it. *For every house has some builder* [e], by whom its several parts were modelled, raised and disposed, and every thing well adjusted in it displays the skill of its Architect and Disposer; *now he who built* and adjusted *all things* [*is*] *God*, whose works of creation and providence are worthy their great Author, and proclaim that power, wisdom, and goodness, which set him infinitely above the most excellent of creatures.

more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house.

4 For every house *is* builded by some man; but he that built all things *is* God.

And that Christ is incomparably more to be honoured than Moses, appears even from this consideration, though inferior to the former, that *Moses* [*was*] *indeed faithful in all his house, as a servant*, who was appointed to act in an inferior œconomy *for a testimony of things afterwards to be mentioned*; the evangelical design of which we shall in some measure discuss in the following parts of this epistle, according to their relation and connection. *But Christ* was faithful in a far superior character, even *as a Son in his own house* [f], that is, over the church, in which

5 And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after:

6 But Christ as a Son over his own house:

c *More honour than Moses.*] As it was their attachment to the Mosaic law, and the writings of the Old Testament, that hindered so many Jews from embracing Christianity, it is with the utmost propriety of address that the *apostle* here undertakes to shew that Christ was superior to Moses; and by a necessary consequence to the rest of the *prophets* and sacred authors, whom they acknowledged to be inferior to this *great* Prophet.

d *Builder of a house.*] Both Mr. Pyle and Dr. Whitby would render κατασκευαζω not to *build*, but to *order* or *govern*, as the word *house* signifies not a building, but a *family*.

e *Hath some builder.*] So I think the words κατασκευαζεται υπο τινος may be rendered, the word *man* not being in the *original*, nor here being properly inserted. Dr. *Calamy* has argued from hence the supreme *Deity* of Christ, in consequence of his being the Creator of all things. (*Calamy on Trin.* p. 44.) But Mr. Pierce pleads, that if it had been the intent of the *apostle* here to assert, that Christ was the *Creator* of all things, it would have been sufficient to have stopped here, and that what follows would sink the argument lower; therefore he would translate it as the *vulgar Latin* does, *The builder of the house*, that is, the head and founder of the family, *has the greatest honour of any person in the house*; and by consequence they must have the *next* honour who are most *nearly* related to him. So Christ who is his *Son* must have greater honour than Moses, who was no more than a *servant*.

f *In his own house.*] Mr. Pierce brings many arguments to prove it should be *in his house*, that is, God's, in which sense the

house: whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

which as Heir of all things he hath not only a trust and office, but also a property, and which is appointed for him to inhabit and preside over; *whose house*, his chosen and delightful habitation, *we* Christians now *are, if we* strenuously *maintain* [*our*] *freedom of profession*[g], *and boasting of hope, stedfast unto the end;* if having so glorious an hope set before us, in which we may justly boast as our greatest honour and happiness, we resolutely adhere to it, and permit nothing to wrest it out of our hands. SECT. iii. Heb. III. 6.

7 Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* hearts; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

12 Take heed, brethren,

And to this I am labouring to animate you, by the representation I have given of the dignity and glory of our blessed Saviour. *Therefore, as the Holy Ghost saith*, in a psalm which he dictated to David, (Psal. xcv. 7,) *To day if ye will* ever *hear his voice* at all, *Harden not your hearts* any longer; lest you bring destruction upon yourselves, *as* your predecessors did, *in the* bitter *provocation* which they presumed to offer me *in the day of temptation in the wilderness; When your* unbelieving *fathers tempted me*, and *proved me*, as if they would have made an experiment how much it was possible for me to bear; *and* this, though they *saw my works* in such a variety of wonders, as passed in the wilderness in the course of *forty* succeeding *years. Therefore I was angry with that* perverse *generation, and said they always* do and will *err in* [*their*] *hearts*, through their own obstinacy and folly, *and they have not known my ways*, nor paid any regard to the clearest discoveries of my will and design; *So* that after repeated abuses of my patience and long-suffering, *I sware in my wrath*, and solemnly declared by my own holy and majestic name, *that they should never enter into my rest*[h]; but that the carcases of all that came adult out of Egypt, shall fall in the wilderness, and that generation of men be totally consumed. How awful a determination, after all the hopes which such signal deliverances had 7 8 9 10 11 12

the very words are used and translated *before;* but as Christ is appointed the *Heir of all things*, the paraphrase cannot I think be contested. Compare Heb. x. 21.

g *Our freedom of profession,*] Some would render it, *if we hold fast the confidence, even the rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end,* supposing it to refer to that confession which they made at their *baptism* with solemnity and joy.

h *My rest.*] Canaan is so called, as they there *reposed* themselves after the labours of a long war, as well as the fatigues of a tedious march; and perhaps as entering upon a course of stated worship, it might appear as a kind of *sabbath-keeping.*

i *Whilst*

SECT. iii.

had concurred to inspire! *See to it* therefore, *brethren, lest there* ever *be in any of you a wicked heart of unbelief, in apostatizing from* him who still wears the same omnipotent terrors, and continues, and will ever continue, *the living* and true *God*, to whom you profess so great a regard, and from whom you will indeed revolt, if you give up the religion of Christ Jesus his Son.

Heb. III. 12.

thren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 You are surrounded with many temptations to do this; *but exhort one another daily*, while you are under this dispensation of grace, *whilst it is called to-day*[i], and the deserved judgments of God are suspended, *that no one of you may* by insensible degrees and artful insinuations, *be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, and its fallacious advances on the mind; whereby if you are not resolutely on your guard, you may be seduced finally to forfeit the invaluable blessings, which are so freely offered, and which have so long been set before you.

13 But exhort one another daily while it is called, To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 2 6 WE are *partakers of this heavenly calling*, and to us are the messages of mercy addressed: let us therefore hear with reverence and obedience, the admonitions of the word of God. Let us behold with veneration and delight, the Son of God becoming the *Messenger* of his Father's love, and the *High Priest of our* Christian *profession*. He is the great *prophet* too, whom God hath raised up unto us *like Moses*, in many respects; but O how far superior to him! More completely *faithful to him, who hath appointed him; faithful as a Son in his own house.*

4 The world is an edifice raised by *Christ*: the church is the *house* in which he delights to reside. Let both be considered in this important view. The Divine perfections of the great Architect are indeed illustriously displayed in the construction and constitution of this *visible world*. Does the meanest house or cottage declare itself to be the work of some intelligent agent? And does it not much more evidently appear, that this commodious and magnificent *structure* must have been planned and reared by proportionable wisdom, grandeur and power?

It is the work of *Christ*; and let it often be devoutly surveyed and contemplated in this view; and from thence let us infer his Divine glories, and read in *them* his matchless condescensions. Let

i *Whilst it is called to-day.*] L'Enfant thinks this refers to that *patience* which God still exercises towards a nation soon to be overwhelmed with his judgments.

a *Forasmuch,*

Let us learn with how much security and delight we may commit our immortal souls to him who *stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth*, and shall endure the same when they shall be dissolved and perish. Let us view him also as the *Lord* of the church; and consider the *fabric of grace* as raised to his honour; that in *that* as his *temple*, *every one might speak of his glory*; and let all the churches, and every member of each, make it their faithful care to honour him more and more. SECT. iii.

In this view may we *hold fast the confidence, and rejoicing of our hope, stedfast unto the end*, and never suffer any one *to take our crown*, or terrify, or allure us, from that faithful subjection of soul to *Christ*, which his perfections and our obligations, to him concur to demand. Who of us can say, he is beyond all danger of being ensnared by *an evil heart of unbelief, of being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin?* Let us then, in compliance with so salutary and necessary an exhortation, redouble our guard; let us *watch* over ourselves and each other; *exhorting one another daily, while it is called to-day*, and charging our souls by the awful authority of the *living God*, that after having approached so near him, that after having so solemnly professed to devote ourselves to him, nothing may ever prevail upon us deliberately and wickedly to depart from him. Ver. 6 12 13

SECT. IV.

The Apostle goes on to repeat the caution he had given against unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into rest: an expression which he shows to refer to something much nobler than that rest which the Jews enjoyed in Canaan, even on their most sacred days, and in their most prosperous ages. Heb. III. 14.—IV. 11.

HEBREWS III. 14.

FOR we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.

HEBREWS III. 14.

I GIVE you such cautions to guard against the deceitfulness of sin, and an evil heart of unbelief, because I know your highest interests are concerned; *for we are made partakers* of the grace and mercy *of Christ*, and admitted by him into the family of God, *if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence* in him as our great Saviour, *stedfast unto the end* of our lives, whatever difficulties and oppositions may arise. Let us therefore be strenuous and incessant in this care; *forasmuch as it is said*[a], in the passage I have SECT. iv. Heb. III. 14.

15 While it is said, To-day, if ye will hear his 15

[a] *Forasmuch, as it is said.*] The words ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι are something ambiguous, and may either signify, *forasmuch as it is said*, or *while it is said;* and if the latter version

SECT. iv.

I have quoted above, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as* they did *in the provocation* which was offered to God in the wilderness. *For some* of them *who heard* so many Divine messages solemnly declared, and the law spoken by the very mouth of God himself from mount Sinai, *provoked* [*him*] to indignation; *but not all they who came out of Egypt by Moses*[b]: there was a remnant then[c], as there now is, of believing and obedient souls, to whom the promise of God shall be accomplished. *And by whom was he provoked* by a long succession of infidelity and folly for *forty years?* [*was it*] *not with those who* well deserved that displeasure? With those who *sinned* against him by suspecting his presence with them, after so many amazing and unparalleled demonstrations of it; *whose carcases*, according to his awful prediction, *fell in the wilderness* during those years of wandering to which they were justly doomed? *And* was there any thing in this that looks like a breach of promise on the part of the blessed God? Far from it.—*To whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but unto those who were* so obstinate and *disobedient*, as entirely to forfeit all claim to his promise and favour? *And* when we come to consider the cause of that disobedience, *we see* that it was owing to a secret infidelity with regard to the Divine power and goodness, either to preserve them in the wilderness, or conduct them into Canaan. So that I may say *they could not* possibly *enter* into the promised rest, *because of unbelief:* that was upon the whole, the

Heb. III. 16.

his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses:

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was* it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

version be preferred, perhaps this 15th verse may be connected with the 13th. *Exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, while it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice:* as if he had said, The matter is of so much importance, that it is not to be neglected so much as for a *single day*, lest the proper season should be slipt. But as αχρις ȣ, a different phrase, was used for *while* in the 13th verse, I judge the rendering I have given most probable, and ventured it, in order to avoid an inconvenient length, by dividing the *section* as I have here done.

b *But not all they who came out of Egypt.*] Mr. Pyle gives it a different and remarkable interpretation, making the former part of the verse an *interrogation, Who were they that when they heard*, that is, heard the report of the spies, (Numb. xiv.) *did provoke him? Were not they all that came out of Egypt?* And this he supposes is a distinct argument for perseverance, taken from the infectious nature, as well as pernicious consequences of infidelity and apostacy. But had this been the sense, I think ȣχι would have been used instead of αλλ' ȣ, especially as by this means the correspondence with the 17th verse would have been more evident.

c There was a remnant.] Joshua, Caleb, the women and children, and some think, some of the Levites, were not included in the sentence. Bishop Fell mentions this as an intimation, that *all* shall not apostatize in the worst times.

d *Let*

SECT. iv.

IV. 1. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

the evil that destroyed them. *Let us therefore* improve so awful a dispensation of Providence to our own instruction, and *fear* [d], *lest a promise being* now *left* [*unto us*] *of entering into his* most happy and glorious *rest, any of us* [e] *should* even at any time, so much as *seem* like *to come short* [*of it.*]

Heb. IIV.

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

2 *For we are made partakers of the good tidings* [f] of the promised rest, *as they also were. But the word* of promise *which they heard, did not profit them*, as it might otherwise have done, in matters of the highest importance, *not being* duly *mixed* and attempered *with faith in them that heard* [*it.*]

3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest; although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

3 *For we* cordially *believing* [g] the gospel, and faithfully retaining it, are so secure of final happiness, that it may with some propriety be said, we *have* already *entered into rest; as he said* in the fore-cited text, *So I sware in my wrath they should not enter into my rest. And* this may lead us farther to reflect on what is elsewhere said concerning *his works;* as they *were finished from the foundation of the world* [h]. *For* after

4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

4 Moses had given us an account of the creation, *he somewhere saith concerning the seventh* [*day*] *thus,* (Gen ii. 2; Exod. xxxi. 17,) *And God rested the seventh day from all his works. And*

5 And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.

5 *in this* [*place*] which we have quoted, *again* he saith [*I have sworn*] *they shall not enter into my rest.* Now this certainly implies, that when there words were written, there was a rest of God

d *Let us therefore fear.*] This example, as has often been observed, is most suitable, being taken from their own *ancestors,* the evil being the same, namely, unbelief, the *time* resembling it just after the establishment of a new constitution, and the *consequence* the same, the exclusion from the rest. The superior dignity of Christ above Moses, and the superior excellence of *Heaven* above *Canaan,* greatly confirm the force of the argument. *Pierce* on Heb. iii. 12, note n.

e *Any of us.*] Some copies read ημων, *us,* instead of υμων *you;* and their authority is evidently confirmed by the connection. See *Dr. Mills in loc.*

f *Partakers of the good tidings.*] So I chuse to render the word ευηγγελισμενοι. For, that we have the *gospel* (taking it for the message by Christ) at least as well as these people had in the *wilderness,* and indeed a great deal more plainly, is so evident, that it may seem but a very low sense of the words, and not worthy the wisdom and gravity of the *apostle* to insert it.

g *We believing have entered,* &c.] Mr. Pierce would render it, *We believing enter into rest,* that is, Faith is the way by which men must expect to enter into whatever rest God promises in one age or another; and so it appears necessary that the *word* should be mixed with it. This, it must be acknowledged, is a very probable and weighty sense.

h *His works finished from the foundation,* &c.] Mr. Pierce thinks the *apostle* intends to lay in an *answer to an objection* which might arise against the caution given, from their being entered into *rest* already, that is, into the land of Canaan, where they celebrated the *sabbath.* He therefore shews that the words could neither extend to the one or the other of these rests.

i *If*

SECT. iv.

Heb. IV. 5.

God, from which these sinners should be excluded, though they actually dwelt in the land of Canaan, secure under the protection of David, their victorious Monarch, and enjoyed the repose of God's sabbath there.

6 *Seeing then it remaineth that some must enter into it,* which is spoken of in this scripture as a certain thing, *and they to whom the good tidings* of rest *were at first declared, did not enter because of* their *unbelief*, which you know was 7 threatened with such punishment; *He again determineth a certain day*, marked out within certain limits and boundaries, in reference to which he urges their immediate attention and obedience to the manifestation of the Divine will, *saying in* that well-known composition of *David*, of which we have just been speaking. *This day*, and that *after so long a time* as had passed after the rest of God at the creation mentioned above, *as it is said, This day, if ye will hear his voice* at all, *harden not your hearts.* 8 *Now*, it is certain, as I hinted above, the rest here referred to is not, and cannot be, interpreted of the land of Canaan; for *if Joshua* [i], who introduced them thither, and settled them there, *had given them* the great and peaceful *rest* referred to, *he would not* so long *after that* settlement *have spoken*, as you see in the days of David he does, *concerning another day* of trial, and another day of rest into which it was a supposable case that they might not enter. 9 *Therefore* it is very evident, that *there remaineth a rest* [k] *for the people of God;* which, when we consider it in reference to that sabbatical rest of which we have been speaking, may properly be called the celebration of a sabbath, which, blessed be God, will be eternal. 10 It may be thus called with happy propriety, *for he who hath entered into* this, *his* final and complete *rest*, of which we now speak, *hath also himself* entirely *ceased from* all the labours and fatigues of *his works, as God* rested *from his own* on that first seventh day, which, in commemoration of it, was appointed sacred to future ages. 11 *Let us therefore*

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached, entered not in because of unbelief:

7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that

i *If Joshua.*] So this proper name should be rendered; for ιησους, *Jesus*, is only the Greek manner of expressing *Joshua.*

k *Remaineth a rest.*] He here changes the word καταπαυσις for σαββατισμος, to signify its being *entire and perfect*, and like a *sabbath.*

that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

therefore labour with all possible diligence and constancy, *to enter into that* important and eternal *rest, that no one may* finally *fall* into ruin *by the same example of disobedience*, which hath undone so many thousands already, and proved so fatal to Israel, in the instance I have been handling at large.

SECT. iv.

Heb. IV. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can be so desirable as to *partake of Christ*, and all the saving benefits, which believers receive in and by him, by virtue of that relation to which he condescends to admit them? Let us seek this happiness by persevering faith, and *holding fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;* bearing still in our minds the melancholy example of the children of *Israel*, who though by such wonderful interpositions led out of *Egypt*, were doomed by the Divine vengeance *to die in the wilderness* for their *unbelief*. That obstructed their entrance into *Canaan;* nor can we ever hope to partake of the *land* of *promise* above, if we resign that *faith*, which is the spring of every other grace that is necessary to prepare us for it.

Chap. iii. 14.

Ver. 16

19

Let us take the alarm, and exercise that pious *fear* which so well consists with a chearful hope in God, and committing our souls to his fatherly care. *We hear the word of salvation;* let us pray that it may *profit* us; and for that purpose, let us be often *realizing* to our minds its Divine authority, and those invisible objects which it opens upon us. It speaks of *a rest remaining for the people of God;* and O! how much nobler a rest, than that of *Canaan*. Our true *Joshua* leads us on, as the Captain of our salvation. He conquers all our spiritual enemies by his invincible word, and will divide us an *inheritance*, an everlasting inheritance there, if we are *faithful to the death. To day after so long a time*, are we still called to pursue it: let us therefore give diligence, that *we may enter:* and let those *sabbaths*, which are instituted in kind commemoration of *God's having rested on the seventh day from his labours*, and which are intended in some degree to anticipate the *heavenly rest*, be improved for this valuable purpose. So shall we ere long *rest from our works, as God did from his*, and after the labours of these few mortal days, shall enjoy immortal tranquillity and repose: we shall pass a perpetual *sabbath* in those elevations of pure *devotion*, which the sublimest moments of our most sacred and happy days here can teach us but imperfectly to conceive.

Chap. iv. 1.

9

8

7

10

SECT. V.

The Apostle enforces the caution he had given them, by awful views of the omniscience of God, and animating representations of the character of Christ, as our High Priest; of whose Divine appointment, gracious administration, and previous suffering, he goes on to discourse, and promises further illustrations of so important a topic. Heb. IV. 12, *to the end, and* V. 1—14.

SECT. V.

Heb. IV. 12.

HEBREWS IV. 12.

HAVING warned you against the fatal example of unbelief, which we see in God's Israel of old, let me intreat you to dwell upon it, in your most serious and attentive reflections. *For the word of God*[a] which gives you this account, as well as that glorious person his essential word, by whom he manifested himself to Israel in the wilderness, [*is*] still *living and efficacious*[b], *and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing* in the acutest manner that can be imagined *even to the separating between the soul and spirit*, the respective principles of animal and rational life, and to the dividing the remotest *and* most closely connected parts *of* the body; so that it reaches to *the joints and* even to *the marrow*[c]; contained in the bones. *And*, to speak in less figurative terms, as he [*is*] *an exact discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart*, his word meets with the most secret purpose, and exerts a Divine authority, in controlling irregularities and disorders which no human

HEBREWS IV. 12.

FOR the word of God *is* quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

a *The word of God.*] It is greatly debated among *commentators*, whether this is to be understood of Christ, or of the *gospel* and scripture-revelation. I have endeavoured to give a hint of both senses in *the paraphrase*; but esteeming the latter preferable, have chiefly pointed that out; and I believe any one versed in the energy of scripture will think it a very *suitable* and *natural* sense.

b *Living and efficacious.*] Mr. Pierce thinks there is an allusion here to the *lightning* by which they fell in the wilderness, whom he had so often and so long been speaking of.

c *Soul and spirit, joints and marrow.*] There seems in this *text* an evident reference to the doctrine of *two principles*, called *soul* and *spirit*, as the seats of rational and sensitive life; to *distinguish* these seems to be spoken of, as an instance of the greatest penetration. Some have explained, as if he had said, he is able at pleasure to give a *mortal wound*; as when the marrow is separated from the joints, or the soul from the spirit, death ensues. But I rather think the meaning of the latter clause is, he can divide the joints, and divide the marrow, that is, enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce perhaps some sentiment which it would not *willingly* have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret, as well as open wickedness.

d *Naked,*

SECT. V.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked, and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

man eye can penetrate. *And* it may well be supposed that it should be so; for *there is no creature, which is not* apparent and *manifested in his presence; but all things* [*are*] *naked, and laid bare*[d] *before the eyes of him to whom we are to give an account.* He discerns them as the inwards of sacrificed animals are discerned, when their bodies are completely laid open, and therefore it will be altogether in vain to attempt a disguise before him. Heb. V. 13.

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

Now on this consideration, and because the all-seeing God who is to be our final Judge, has displayed his mercy in directing our eyes to a Saviour, by whose mediation we are to be delivered from the fierceness of his deserved vengeance; let us, I say, by such powerful considerations be awakened to have recourse to him, and encouraged to confide in him, and to adhere to his cause amidst all opposition. *Having therefore a great High Priest, who hath passed* through the vail, and entered *into the heavens*, that he might there intercede with God for us, even *Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast* [*our*] *profession* of faith in him, and never suffer the most violent attack to wrest it from us. 14

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, *yet* without sin.

For we have not an High Priest incapable of sympathising with our infirmities, but on the contrary, [*one who*] *has* a most tender feeling of them, having *been* himself *tried in every respect, in like manner,* [*with us, yet*] *without* any degree of *sin*, or any approach toward it, from which, amidst his severest trials, he remained perfectly free. 15

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Let us, therefore, humbly confiding in his intercession, *approach with freedom of speech to the throne of grace*, to present our petitions, *that we may receive* that *mercy* which he hath been appointed to purchase, *and* may *find grace* from that throne *for our seasonable assistance*, according to our respective necessities. 16

V. 1. For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for

I speak of Christ under the character of the great High Priest with evident propriety, to which I hope you will attend; *for every high priest*[e] *taken from among men*, as those of the Mosaic V. 1.

d *Naked, and laid bare.*] It has been well observed, that these *two words* contain a graceful allusion to the custom in *sacrificing* of flaying off the skin from the victim, and cutting it open, whereby all the vitals and inwards are exposed to full view; as γυμνος signifies *what had no cover*, and τετραχηλισμενος, *what had no concealment within*. *See Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 251.

e *Every high priest.*] All the following discourse is intended to moderate their regards

SECT. V.

Heb. V. 1.

Mosaic ritual are, *is constituted*, or chosen *for* the benefit of *men*, and set *over things which relate to* the service and honour of *God*, *that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins* in
2 an acceptable manner. *Being able to proportion his compassion*[f] *to those that are ignorant, and wandering* from the exact paths of God's commandments, for whom alone, you know, sin-offerings are provided; *because he himself also*
3 *is incident to infirmity. And for this reason it is necessary that he should offer* an appointed expiatory sacrifice *for sins on his own account, as well as for the people*, and should make way for their sin-offering by the presentation of his own.

for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way: for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity:

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 *And this* is so awful an *office*, that *no man* who has any regard to duty or safety, *taketh* it *to himself; but he* only wears it *who is called of God* for that purpose, *as Aaron* [*was.*] *So*
5 *Christ also*, we well know, *did not glorify himself to be made an high-priest*[g]; he did not aspire to, or seize upon this exalted office without a proper call; *but he* raised him to this conspicuous dignity, *who said unto him*, in the place quoted and pleaded above, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*[h]. *As also in ano-*
6 *ther* [*place,*] which it will be proper to take very particular notice of, (Psal. cx. 4,) *He saith* to him whom he had called to sit on his right-hand, *thou* [*art*] *a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec.*

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a Priest for ever after the order of Meschisedec.

7 Such a priest shall we presently see our great Redeemer to have been, even that compassionate Saviour, *who in the days of his flesh*, and while he sojourned here amidst the infirmities and calamities to which human nature is obnoxious, being assaulted with the utmost violence by the

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death,

gards for the Levitical priesthood, and to give them more exalted *notions* of Christ, that they might be more resolute in adhering to him.

f *Proportion his compassion.*] So the word, μετριοπαθειν, properly signifies. The *ignorant and erroneous* is here put, by a usual figure, for those who *wander, or sin, through ignorance*, the case in which *priests* appointed by men, were to offer sacrifices for them.

g *Did not glorify himself*, &c.] He did not assume the *mediatorial* office without a Divine authority, nor affect to appear before his time in the pomp and splendor of it.

h *This day have I begotten thee.*] This will by no means prove he was not a *High Priest*, before his *resurrection* from the dead; and indeed if it signifies that his priesthood is to be dated only from the day of his *resurrection*, not to mention the other absurdities of that supposition, it would contrary to the judgment of those who bring it in this view, prove, that Christ was a Priest while he was *upon earth, that is*, during the period between his resurrection and ascension.

death, and was heard, in that he feared.

the powers of darkness, *offered* repeated *prayers and supplications*, which were attended *with* humble prostrations, *a strong cry and* flowing *tears to him who was able to save him from death and* his supplications were not in vain; for though his heavenly Father did not think fit to exert that power in his total deliverance; yet *he was heard in* being delivered from *that which he* particularly *feared*[i], and which threw him into such an agony in the garden, that he sweat drops of blood. It is indeed a wonderful, but at the same time a very instructive dispensation, and therefore worthy of our deep consideration and reflection; that *though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience*[k] *by the things which he suffered*, and was trained up for more eminent services, by a series of painful discipline. *And being* thus *consecrated* to God[l] by his own blood, in virtue of which he was installed in his priestly office, *he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him;* to all that practically own his authority, as well as profess a dependence on his grace; being, as we observed before, *Called* and denominated *of God an High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec: Concerning whom* by the way, it is necessary that before we dismiss this argument, *we speak, having much discourse, and* some of it perhaps *hard to be understood;* not so much from the difficulty of the thing itself, as *because you are* slow and *sluggish of hearing*, and your minds are not awakened to that attention to these things, which might reasonably be

SECT. V.

Heb. V. 7.

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by things which he suffered:

8

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him;

9

10 Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

10

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

11

i From *that which he* particularly *feared.*] So I chose to render and explain the words, though Bishop Fell and some others, taking εὐλαβεια for a *religious reverence of God*, (compare chap. xii. 28,) interpret it, as if it had been said, that *his piety* rendered his prayer acceptable. Dr. Whitby has said so much to confute this sense, and establish the rendering in the *paraphrase*, that I need not add more, but refer to the note on Luke xxii. 42, (Vol. VII. p. 349 note h,) for a further illustration of the general *interpretation* here given to this *text.*

k *Learned obedience.*] He found he must suffer, and by one degree of suffering was better fitted for another. As Christ's human soul advanced gradually in knowledge, so also in the perfection of virtue, though always free from any defilement of sin; and his patient and cheerful submission was improved by every trial.——But Dr. Whitby would render it, *he taught obedience* to others by it.

l *Being made perfect.*] Archbishop Tillotson would translate it *having attained the end of his race through sufferings, that is*, pass through sufferings in his way to consummate glory. (Compare John xix. 30; Luke xiii. 32; Heb. ii. 10.) But Dr. Jackson would render it, *being consecrated*, and is large in shewing how Christ might be said to be *consecrated* to his priestly office by his passion. Compare chap. vii. 28, ii. 10. See *Dr. Jackson's Works, Tom.* ii. *Book* ix. p. 943, &c. and Dr. Owen on chap. ii. 10.

SECT. V.

be expected from you: and especially as you are much prejudiced against every thing which may seem to lessen the glory of the Levitical priesthood: *For* indeed, *whereas you ought for the time* that you have been under the instructions of the gospel, to have been qualified *to be teachers* of others, you are so attached to Jewish ceremonies and forms, that *ye have need again that one should* lead you back as it were to some of the first principles of religion, relating to the ends and purposes of Christ's death, and *teach you what* [*are*] *the* first initial *elements of the Divine oracles;* so that you seem to be in a state of infancy as to these things, *and are become persons who have need of milk, and not of strong food,* such as suits a manly age and robust constitution. *For every one who partaketh of milk,* and subsists on that, without being able to digest strong food, [*is*] to be considered as *unskilful in the word of righteousness* [m], that is in the gospel, which directs us in the true way to justification by the blood and righteousness of the great Redeemer; *for he is* yet but *an infant*, and a compassionate regard must be paid to him under this view, in hope that he may hereafter attain to a superior stature, and more vigorous age. *But strong food belongs to full grown men, who by* long use and *habit, have* [*their*] *senses exercised* so as to be able readily *to distinguish* between *both good and evil;* which if they cannot, there may indeed be danger of being imposed upon by that which would be unwholesome to their souls; though administered under the pretence of being fit to nourish them, and adapted to persons of most eminent attainments.

Heb. V. 12.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God: and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth milk, *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iv. 12.

MAY we all experience more of the efficacy of the *Divine word* upon our hearts. May we all be more and more thoughtful of the account we are to *give up of ourselves to God*; and of that *perfect discerning* which he has not only of our actions, but the *secrets of our hearts*, that we may never go about to conceal any thing from him, *before whom all things are naked and open.*

When

m *Word of righteousness.*] This phrase Mr. Pierce explains by referring to the passages of the Old Testament, which speak of *justification by faith*, quoted in the epistle to the Romans and Galatians; which these Hebrews might seem to overlook. L'Enfant explains them much in the same sense.

When we consider how many evils this *all-penetrating* eye hath discerned *there*, let it teach us to rejoice in that *compassionate High Priest*, who hath undertaken our cause; which could never succeed in any other hand. And let it *embolden* our petitions in humble expectation, that we shall not only receive that *mercy*, without which we perish, but *grace to* strengthen and *help us in* proportion to all *our necessities*. And when pressed with temptations, let it revive us to recollect, that *he was in all points tempted as we are*, so far as it was consistent with the *perfect innocence* which his office required, and which always gained new lustre by every attempt of the enemy to obscure and pollute it.

SECT. V.

Ver. 14, 16, 15

Let inferior *ministers* in God's sanctuary learn to imitate him; and being themselves *compassed with* so many *infirmities*, *have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*. And under a sense of our common weakness, let us all be earnest in our applications to the *throne of grace* for help. If *Christ* himself, *in the days of his flesh, poured out supplications with strong crying and tears*, let none of us imagine we can be safe in the neglect of *prayer*, or that we are ever to despond in any circumstances which leave room for devout ejaculations to God. Still he lives, who is *able to save from death*, and who can also *hear us in that which we fear*.

Chap. v. 2. 7

Let us wisely prepare for affliction. If *Christ*, *though a Son*, *learned obedience by sufferings*, how much more do we need the salutary lessons they teach. But let no sufferings prevent our adhering to him, who being *consecrated* by them to so high an office, *is become the author* of salvation, *of eternal salvation*, to his faithful followers. Let it ever be remembered, that it is *to them that obey him*, that this *salvation* is promised: may we be found in their number; and being entered as obedient *disciples* into his school, may we become *proficients* there; not such *dull* and forgetful scholars, as need to be led back daily to the *first elements* and first principles *of the Divine oracles*, not *babes in Christ*, and *unskilful in the word of righteousness*; but such as having our *senses* spiritually *exercised to discern good and evil*, may be capable of receiving and digesting *strong meat*, and may thereby grow stronger and stronger.

8 9 11, 12 14

SECT. VI.

The Apostle declares his resolution of advancing to sublimer truths without dwelling farther upon the first principles, for the sake of those who might have apostatized from Christianity; and whose case he represents as very hopeless. Heb. VI. 1—9.

HEBREWS VI. 1.

SECT. VI. Heb. VI. 1.

WE have had reason to complain, that too many of you are but in an infant state; yet I know, that as I intimated before, there are some among you, who can bear stronger food than the state of babes will admit: to such I would shew some regard. *Dismissing therefore* any farther *discourse on the* first *principles*[a] [*of the doctrine*] *of Christ, let us be carried on to perfection*, and pursue more eminent degrees of improvement in it, and more advanced and elevated knowledge: *not laying again the* first *foundation* of Christianity, by inculcating the well-known necessity *of repentance from dead works*, from the practices of those who are dead in sin, *and* whereby the soul is defiled, as the priests of God were by the touch of a dead body; nor insisting on the importance *of faith in* the one living and true *God*, as the universal Lord of all;

2 Nor leading you back to *the doctrine of baptisms*[b], those instituted under the Mosaic dispensation

HEBREWS VI. 1.

THEREFORE, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God,

2 Of the doctrine of baptisms,

a *First principles.*] Mr. Pierce understands all that follows as referring to the Jewish doctrines, which might be considered as the *elements* of the Christian. *Repentance from dead works*, that is, from sin, was a Jewish doctrine, and he thinks it had a peculiar reference to that solemn and public repentance on the day of atonement. *Faith towards God*, he considers as without any regard to the Messiah. The *baptism* he takes for the *Jewish washings*, observing that βαπτισμοι in the *plural* number is never used in any other sense. *Laying on of hands*, he takes for the rite that attended sacrifices; and imagines that the *resurrection of the dead*, and *eternal judgment*, are either to be understood as principles common to Judaism and Christianity, or rather peculiar to the former; in which view, the *resurrection of the dead* refers either to the *resurrection* of particular persons under the Old Testament in confirmation of the Divine mission of the *prophets*, (which might in the nature of things render the doctrine of Christ's resurrection more credible to those who believed these,) or the resurrection of the Jewish people from Egypt, or deliverance from any other great extremity. Compare Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12. And the latter, that is, *eternal judgment*, he thinks may be explained of dreadful judgments inflicted of old, as upon the sinners of the old world, the inhabitants of Sodom, &c. I thought it not improper to propose so remarkable an interpretation, but not seeing any reason for *confining* several of the clauses to so contracted a sense, I have taken them in a much larger extent.

b *Of baptisms.*] Lord *Barrington* understands this of the *baptism of water*, and the *effusion of the Holy Spirit*, by which the first disciples among the Jews, and the first converts among the devout and idolatrous Gentiles were initiated. He also explains

baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

sation to inculcate moral purity on all who would draw near to God with acceptance; or that appointed by Christ, as the rite by which we enter into his church. *And* we will not now treat *of the imposition of hands*[c], by which the Spirit hath been communicated to those that have embraced the gospel, *and of the resurrection of the dead*, which though not so clearly and fully revealed, was assuredly believed by the Jewish Church before our Lord's appearance; *and of eternal judgment*, when the whole world shall be convened before Christ, and each of its inhabitants fixed by his final sentence in an unalterable eternity.

SECT. VI.

Heb. VI. 2.

3 And this will we do, if God permit.

These are indeed important doctrines, and it will become you constantly to bear them in mind. But while I am addressing you at present, it may be more profitable for me to lead you into some higher improvements in Christian knowledge, and to build some farther Divine instruction upon these sure and solid foundations. *And this we will do, if God permit;* if God may assist us in attempting it, and this letter reach you, as I trust it will, while you continue your adherence to the Christian faith.

3

4 For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have

As for those who seem to have forgot these sacred principles, and put the greatest slight upon them, by renouncing our holy religion, I give them up as persons from whom I have no farther expectations; *for* [*it is*] in a manner *impossible*[d] to succeed in any charitable endeavour *with regard to those who have once been enlightened*

4

explains the *laying on of hands*, as referring to the immediate communication of *spiritual gifts* by means of the *apostles*. These he thinks were *first principles*, as *baptism* was the first entrance into the church, and *laying on of hands*, the great evidence of it, as *faith* and *repentance* are the substance of Christianity, and a *resurrection and eternal judgment* the great motives leading men to embrace it. *Bar. Mis. Ess.* II. p. 116.

c *The imposition of hands.*] This answered such great purposes in the Christian church, as the appointed method of communicating important gifts, that it might well be mentioned among *first principles*.——But it is by a very precarious consequence, that any can infer from hence the *universal* obligation of this rite, in admitting persons into full *church-membership*, or even to the *ministry*. See *Pierce's Vindicat.* p. 463.

d *For it is impossible.*] This text has been the subject of great debate, which I must not by any means enter into here.—Compare *Limb. Theol.* 5. lxxxiv. 10—19; *Baxter's Works*, Vol. II. p. 305.—As to the phrase *enlightened*, it is certain, the ancient *fathers* early used it to express *baptism*. But in this view I much question the propriety of the phrase, and think that *illumination*, as well as *regeneration*, in the most important and scriptural sense of the words, were regularly to *precede* the administration of that ordinance. And I think that what the Papists, and some too ready to follow them, have taught of an extraordinary illumination following the administration of the ordinance of *baptism*, is very enthusiastical, and absolutely destitute of proof.

SECT. vi.

Heb. VI. 4.

ened with the knowledge of such glorious truths as are essential to Christianity, *and have tasted of the heavenly gift* which our exalted Redeemer hath shed down upon us, *and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost*[e], in his miraculous and amazing communications. *And have tasted* by some affectionate impressions on their minds, the efficacy of *the good word of God, and* felt something of *the powers of the world to come*[f], awakening in them a conviction of sin, and some desires after holiness, and resolutions in favour of it: I say, that as for such persons, *if*, after all this, *they* totally *fall away*[g] from Christianity, their case is in a manner desperate, and it is impossible *again to renew* the good impressions made on *them*, so as to bring them back *to repentance*, and to recover them to a sense of duty; *since they* reject the strongest evidence that can be conceived, and do, as it were, by this apostacy and blasphemy of theirs, so far as in them lies, *crucify to themselves the son of God again*[h], *and make an open example* [*of him:*] by renouncing that Divine doctrine which hath been so

have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come:

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame.

e *Heavenly gift—partakers of the Holy Ghost.*] Though by *heavenly gift*, Archbishop *Tillotson* (Vol. II. p. 485,) understands *remission of sin*, urging Rom. v. 15—18, in proof of it; and distinguishes it from the communication of the *Holy Ghost*, and this too, as he ventures to assert, in its sanctifying power and influence; I see no necessity for making such a distinction, or extending in this place the energy of the *Spirit* beyond his *extraordinary* gifts. Bishop Hopkins quotes Acts viii. 15, (which he thinks must include Simon Magus,) as a proof, that *unregenerate* men might receive the *Holy Ghost*. *Hopkin's Works*, p. 520.

f *The powers of the world to come.*] This phrase is ambiguous. Some understand it of those miraculous powers with which the gospel-age, (called *the world to come* elsewhere, and particularly chap. ii. 5,) should be attended.—But if the preceding clause be explained as above, it will diversify the sense more, to understand this of *impressions* made relating to the *importance* of a *future state*. And as we so often read of *this world* and *the present world*; the invisible state into which we pass by death, may certainly with great propriety be expressed by the phrase of *the world to come*; as indeed that is its common signification. But if any on the whole think it is more reasonable to interpret this clause in the former sense, and so will understand the other clauses, as explained in the former part of *note* e, it must be observed that the *apostle*, in thus giving judgment upon the case, if it should happen, does not declare that it actually does.

g *If they* totally *fall away.*] It is certain the words, *fall away*, must be understood *thus:* or it would prove, contrary to the plainest fact, that it is impossible to recover Christians who have fallen into great and wilful sins.

h *Crucify to themselves*, &c.] Some would interpret it, *so far as in them lies they do it*, that is they pour all the contempt upon Christ in their *power*, and offer all the injury to him they can; and were he upon earth, and subject to the violence he once suffered, they would treat him as his worst enemies did.—It seems to me that the *apostle* here gives up *apostates*, as hopeless in the general, in order to fortify Christians against the great danger to which they were exposed. But I think it cannot be inferred from hence, that, in ages where the evidence of Christianity might be less plainly *demonstrative*, those who had fallen into this crime with circumstances less aggravated, and professed repentance, were never to be received to the peace of the *church* any more; as the *Donatists* supposed, and on *this text* founded their inexorably rigorous discipline.

i Dry

so gloriously demonstrated to them, they do in effect declare they look on Jesus as an impostor, who deserved what he met with; and they seem to ascribe the miraculous energy of the Spirit to some diabolical agency: which Christ himself represented as the sin that should never be forgiven. (Compare Mat. xii. 30, 31.) SECT. vi. Heb. VI. 6.

7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

We will therefore, without any farther efforts for the recovery of such, leave them to the awful sentence which he hath pronounced upon them. *For* whereas *the earth that drinketh in the rain, which often cometh upon it, and produceth herbage fit for them by whom it is cultivated, partaketh of the Divine blessing*, and wears a pleasant and delightful face; so shall those souls, who improve gospel-ordinances and Christian knowledge, so as to produce the fruits of holiness, be favourably accepted of God, and feel a Divine joy in themselves. 7

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose [end *is* to be burned.

But as *that* ground *which bringeth forth* only *thorns and briars*, under the same cultivation, and the same refreshing showers, [*is*] *rejected* as utterly useless; so likewise shall the unfruitful soul be deserted by God in righteous displeasure, *and* is *near to* that dreadful hour, when *a curse* shall come upon it never to be revoked. And as such a barren soil, *whose* case we have been describing, is at last burnt up by the violent heat of the sun, and becomes dry heath[i]; so the *end* of such an unhappy creature [*shall be*] everlasting *burning*, in that miserable world, where all the means of grace and influences of the Spirit of God shall be for ever withdrawn, and the soul shall be given up to incurable wickedness, and eternal anguish. 8

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

Such is the case of these wretched apostates; *but* I will enlarge no farther on this awful subject; for *we are persuaded* there is room to hope much *better things of you*, my *beloved* brethren, *even things that accompany salvation*, and do, as it were, bring it along with them: we have this chearful expectation concerning you, *though we* think ourselves obliged *thus* to *speak*; that nothing in our power may be wanting to guard you against the greatest danger. 9

IMPROVE-

i. Dry heath.] *Heath* is the emblem of the *cursed man.* Jerem. xvii. 5, 6. See Dr. *Whitby in loc.*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. vi.

Ver. 1, 2

IN every respect, both with regard to knowledge and practice, let us *go on to perfection:* and if we cannot attain to it, let us rise as near it as we can! For this purpose, as Christians, let us remember what foundation has been already laid, of *repentance and faith*, of *baptism*, of a *resurrection*, and a *future judgment;* a judgment, *eternal* in its consequences, and therefore infinitely important. And let us remember, that as the building, in its highest advances, rests upon the foundation, and owes its stability to its union with it, so in like manner does our progress and advance in Christian piety stand in a near connection with our retaining *these* truths, though we by no means confine ourselves to them.

4 It is by a continual care to improve in them, that we shall most happily escape the danger, the dreadful danger of *apostacy*, to which we may otherwise be exposed. And O! let the *awful passage* before us be duly attended to in this view! Let us not 5 rest in any *enlightening* we may have received, in any *taste* we may have had of the *heavenly gift*, of the *good word of God*, or the *powers of the world to come;* nor in any operation of the *Spirit of God* upon our minds, to form them to the most splendid talents, and qualify us for the most pompous external services. Men may have all these, and yet *fall away*, and their guilt be- 6 come more aggravated: they may injure the *Redeemer* so much the more in proportion to all they have known of him; and indeed will be capable of wounding him the deeper by their apostacy, and of *exposing* him to greater infamy. Let us daily pray to be delivered from so great an evil! We are not left to be like a 7 *barren wilderness; the rain* from on high *comes often upon us;* and we enjoy the choicest cultivation: may we *bring forth fruits meet for him by whom we are dressed*, the genuine fruits of practical, vital religion. So shall we *receive a blessing from God*, and flourish more and more, till we are transplanted to the *paradise* above.

8 But as for those unhappy creatures who still continue to bring forth *briars and thorns*, let them dread that final *rejection* which will be the portion of those who persist in abusing the Divine goodness; let them dread the *curse*, the awful, the irrevocable *curse*, to be pronounced on such; let them dread the everlasting dearth with which their souls shall be parched, when ordinances, when the workings of the Spirit of God, when the common comforts and supports of this mortal animal life, shall be no more.

Gladly

Gladly do the ministers of *Christ* entertain *better hopes* concerning those committed to their care, while yet there is room for hope, though faithfulness to God, and to the souls of men, obliges them to *speak* in the language of such *cautions* as these. May Divine grace apply it to those who are particularly concerned in it, and plant what hath hitherto been a barren and abandoned desart, with such *fruits of holiness*, as may transform it into the *garden of the Lord.* SECT. VI. 9

SECT. VII.

Addressing himself to sincere believers, the Apostle comforts them with a view of the goodness of God, and his fidelity to those sacred engagements into which he hath condescended to enter; the performance of which is farther sealed by the entrance of Christ into heaven as our forerunner. Heb. VI. 10, *to the end.*

HEBREWS VI. 10.

FOR God *is* not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end;

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

HEBREWS VI. 10. SECT. VII.

I JUST now mentioned my hopes of your complete salvation; and I have reason to entertain such hopes, as well knowing the benevolent and pious dispositions which many of you have expressed. *For God* [*is*] *not unrighteous*, or unmindful of his gracious promises, so as *to forget your* diligent *work and labour* in his service, animated by a principle *of* unfeigned *love, which you have manifested,* not only to your brethren, but *to his name* also, in *having ministered, and* in still *ministring*, as his Providence gives you opportunity, *to* the necessities of *the saints. And* 11 *we* heartily *wish* that this temper were as universal as it is commendable where it prevails; so *that every one of you*, into whose hands this epistle *may* come, might *shew the same diligence* and exert the same studious care, in order *to* establish *the full assurance of* your *hope*, even *unto the end* of your Christian course; by which hope you must still be supported, while in this world: *That* so on the whole *you may not be* 12 *sluggish* and indolent, *but imitators of those, who, through* the exercise of *faith and long-suffering, do* now reap the blessed fruit of these graces, and *inherit the promises*[a] which God hath Heb. VI. 10.

a *Through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises.*] Mr. Pierce explains this of the Gentiles who were converted to Christianity. If it be intended as a hint to stir up the Jews to emulation, as he supposes, it is indeed a very obscure one; for

SECT. VII.

hath made to support and cherish them in the hearts of his people through every age.

Heb. VI. 13. And a glorious confirmation you will find these promises to be, when you come to compare one spiritual object with another, and are better skilled in the method of interpreting the sacred oracles, on principles which I am going to lay down. *For* I may in the first place lead you to observe, that *when God made the* great and comprehensive *promise to Abraham*, (Gen. xii. 2, 3, and xvii. 1—6,) on which so much of our hope as Christians doth also depend, the promise that he would be a God to him, and that all nations should be blessed in his seed; *seeing he had no greater* [*a person*] *to swear by, he swore by himself*, even by the honours of his 14 own sacred and Divine name; *Saying*, by an audible voice from heaven when he repeated the promise, while Abraham stood with Isaac before that altar on which with humble submission to the Divine appointment he had just before laid him, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17,) "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that *blessing I will* assuredly *bless thee, and multiplying I will* assuredly *multiply thee*[b]; I will bless and multiply thee remarkably, so as to make thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the 15 sea-shore." *And thus having waited long* in humble faith and patience, *he obtained* in due time the accomplishment of *the promise*, first in the birth of Isaac, and then, after a much longer attendance, the comsummation of a better hope. And we whose circumstances so happily resemble his in this respect, may well follow the example of his faith, when we survey 16 the foundation of it. *For men truly swear by a* [*being*] *greater* than themselves, to whom they ascribe

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee.

15 And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and

for comparatively it is a low sense, in which Christians in this imperfect state can be said to *inherit the promises*. I rather think it refers to *all good men*, who were departed out of our world, whether in former or latter days, and under whatever dispensation they died.—Taking it in this view, it will be (as several have observed,) an argument against the soul's continuing in a state of *sleep* during the intermediate period between death and the resurrection.

b *Multiplying, I will multiply thee.*] That part of the promise to Abraham which immediately follows the clause here quoted, in Gen. xxii. 17, most certainly relates to the Gentiles; and therefore had the *apostle* intended ver. 12. of this chapter in the sense in which Mr. Pierce explains it, of *the Gentiles converted to Christianity*, I cannot think he would have stopped short at *multiplying, I will multiply thee*, and omitted what follows, of making *his seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea-shore*, and—*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us;

19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail,

20 Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, *even Jesus* made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

ascribe that knowledge and power, which is supposed to render him the object of their veneration and worship; *and an oath*, when thus taken *for confirmation* [*is*] *to them an end of all* farther strife and *contention*. *On which account*, the blessed *God*, in humble condescension to our infirmities, *being willing in the most abundant manner to manifest to the heirs of the promise, the immutability of his counsel*, and his determinate resolution of bestowing upon them the blessings he engaged, *interposed with* the solemnity of *an oath*. *That by two immutable things, in* each of *which* [*it is*] *impossible for God to lie*, even his word and his oath, *we might have strong consolation*, even we *who* in humble obedience to the gracious designs of his gospel, *have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope laid before us*, the noble prize which that gospel proposes as the great object of our ambition and pursuit; I speak of eternal life, the hope of *which* through the Divine goodness *we have*, and I trust we shall resolutely retain it, *as an anchor of the soul, both secure and stedfast, and* as *entering into the place within the vail*, the holy of holies, where God dwells, and where we hope to dwell for ever with him. This anchor will indeed be sufficient to enable us to out-ride all the storms of temptation, being fixed in that glorious, though invisible world, *whither Jesus* as *the Forerunner is entered for us*, to take possession of glory in our name, and prepare all things necessary for our admittance into it: even he [*who is*] *made an High-Priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec*; as we are going more largely to shew.

SECT. vii.

Heb. VI. 16.

17

18

19

20

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what amazing condescension doth God, by his *apostles*, speak of those *works* and *labours of love*, which the persons who have performed them with the greatest simplicity of heart, know to be most undeserving of his regard! How kindly hath he made himself a *debtor* to us, or rather to his own promise and oath, so that it would indeed be *unrighteous* in him to fail those expectations which nothing in ourselves could possibly raise! Let us then be animated to the greatest *diligence*, by a *full assurance of hope*. There are those who *inherit the promises*, of which we are the heirs, and they have passed to that glorious inheritance by

Ver. 10

11

SECT. vii. the exercise of *faith* and *patience*. Let us chide our *sluggish* souls into a more resolute *imitation* of them. And when they are ready
12 to sink into indolence again, let us again awaken them by viewing those *promises*, and the *fidelity* of that God who hath made them, and who hath added, by a condescension that can never be sufficiently acknowledged and adored, the sanction of his *oath* to
13 that of his *word*. Behold the *strong consolation* which he hath given.
16, 18 And given to whom? To those *who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them* in the gospel. Thither let us fly for our lives; fly, as if we heard the footsteps of the *avenger of blood* just behind us, and our lives depended upon the speed of the present moment. Happy the souls that have found this refuge! Whose
19 faith and *hope* like a strong and steady *anchor*, hath *entered into heaven*, hath fixed on that blessed *Redeemer* who lives and reigns there, who appears as an *Intercessor* for his people, and intercedes with such efficacy and success, that he is also to be regarded as their *Forerunner*, as gone *to prepare a place* for them. Let us constantly
20 retain that view of him; and while we continue exposed to all the labours and sorrows of *mortality*, let us seek our safety and our comfort by fixing our *regards* upon him, waiting continually the aids of his grace, till he shall see fit to call us to fill the place he hath provided, and receive the inheritance he hath secured for us.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle enters into a parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, as agreeing in title and descent; and from various respects, in which the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood, infers also the superior glory of the priesthood of Christ. Heb. VII. 1—17.

SECT. viii.

HEBREWS VII. 1.

I HAVE again and again mentioned that scripture, in which the Messiah is spoken of in
Heb. VII. 1. prophecy, as made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Now I think, it may be worth our while to dwell a little more intently on the contemplation of this subject; and then we shall find, that without straining the allegory, it holds in a variety of instructive particulars: *for this Melchisedec*, of whom Moses speaks in that celebrated history, (Gen. xiv. 18, &c.) to which David refers, [*was*] *king of Salem*, and *priest of the most high God*: in both which offices

HEBREWS VII. 1.

FOR this Melchisedec king of Salem, priest of the most high God

God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him;

offices he was a remarkable type of our blessed Lord. And it is well known, he was the celebrated and holy person *who met* that illustrious patriarch, our father *Abraham*, *when returning from the slaughter of the kings*, who had taken Lot prisoner, with the king of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities of the plain. *And* we are expressly told, that he *blessed him* on this occasion, that is, he pronounced on Abraham himself a blessing in the name of God to whom he ministred. *To whom also Abraham* 2 *divided the tenth*[a] *of all* the spoils he had brought back, in token of his reverence to the office he bore. And indeed when we come to consider his name and title according to the signification of it in the Hebrew language, we shall find it bear a remarkable analogy to that of our Lord Jesus Christ: for *first*, his name Melchisedec, *being interpreted*, signifies that he [*is*] *King of righteousness*, or a most righteous sovereign; *and then*, his title taken from the place where he resided and ruled, is, *King of Salem, that is, King of Peace*; for it is well known that Salem in the Hebrew tongue is peace, as Melech is King, and Tsedec righteousness.

SECT. viii.

Heb. VII. 1.

2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace:

3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days,

Now if we come to compare this Melchisedec, 3 this King of righteousness and peace, with the Mosaic priests, we shall find a remarkable difference in many respects, in all which there is a resemblance between him and our Lord. For instance, whereas it is necessary the Jewish priests should all be of the family of Aaron, and there are several laws concerning the descent and qualities of their mothers, which must be observed and recorded, in order to make out their legitimacy, and their consequent right to serve at the altar, Melchisedec is, as it were, *without father*, and *without mother*[b], neither his father

a *Abraham divided the tenth.*] The objection which Mr. Chubb has brought against this from Gen, xiv. 23. as if it were Melchisedec who paid tithes to Abraham, and not Abraham to Melchisedec, is really trifling; a change of person, without express notice given of it, being usual in the sacred scriptures, and in all writers, and languages; not to observe, that the version of the *Seventy* in the common editions, and in that copy which is printed in the polyglot, instead of *He*, expressly reads *Abraham*. But Mr. Chubb's particular exceptions have been so abundantly answered by the author of *the case of Abraham and Melchisedec, Jacob and Esau, &c. considered*, published anno 1746, against Chubb's four Dissertations, that I need not particularly enlarge. This may however be a proper place to observe, that the relative must evidently refer to the remote *antecedent* in the following passages, Luke xvii. 16. Acts xxiii. 23. 2 Kings xviii. 29. Psal. cv. 37. Acts vii. 5. Deut. xxxi. 22, 23. Gen. xiv. 20, *&c.*

b *Without father, without mother.*] It has been

SECT. VIII.

father nor his mother are mentioned in scripture; and he is *without pedigree*[c], or any written account of his genealogy, by which it may be traced up to more distant progenitors of the priestly order; and herein he answers to Christ, who with respect to his human nature, had no father, nor any mother with regard to his Divine. Again, as there was a certain age at which the Jewish priests entered upon their ministry in the tabernacle or temple and at which they quitted it, Melchisedec *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, mentioned in scripture, *but being* in that respect as if he were immortal, and therein *made like the Son of God*, who existed before all worlds, he *remaineth a priest for ever*[d].

Heb. VII. 3.

days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.

4 *Now* I doubt not, my brethren, but that as I proceed in this argument, *you see* and reflect, *how great a man*[e] *this* Melchisedec [*was*], *to whom*, as I hinted above, *even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of* all *the spoils* he had recovered from the king of Shinar and his allies.

4 Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

5 *And* this will be farther illustrated, by considering *that truly they of the descendents of Levi who receive the* Aaronical *priesthood, have according to the law* by which they are constituted, *a commandment;* and in consequence of that, a right only *to tythe the people that is their brethren, though* indeed *coming* as well as themselves, *out of the loins of Abraham: But he* of whom we

5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

been observed by many, and it is not unfit the *reader* should be reminded of it here; that several ancient writers of character among the heathens, speak of persons being *born of no father*, or *without a father*, when they mean only to express by it that their *father was unknown*. See *Harris on the Messiah, Serm.* ix. p. 262. *Elsner* likewise (*Observ. Sacr.* Vol. II. p. 347,) hath some remarkable quotations to shew that it was usual among the Grecks, to say of a person that he was ἀπάτωρ, ἀμήτωρ, *without father, without mother*, when his parents were unknown. And accordingly several of the *fathers* imagine, that this is here asserted of Melchisedec, because there is no mention made of his parents *in the sacred scriptures*. But the reason, in Elsner's opinion, is, that there was no trace of his parentage in the *sacerdotal genealogies*, he being without *priestly descent*, ἀγενεαλογήτος, as it immediately follows, *not enrolled among the priests*.

c *Without pedigree.*] As the *genealogy* of our Lord is so distinctly delivered both by the evangelists Matthew and Luke, there may seem here to be a failure in the resemblance; I therefore added the words which determine it to the idea of some *priestly* ancestors, which will render the propriety very conspicuous, and is agreeable to Elsner's interpretation mentioned in the *note* above.

d *Remaineth a priest for ever.*] Bishop *Burnet* would transpose this clause, *He was a priest of God for ever, made like unto the Son of God.* I cannot forbear observing, that I think his interpretation and illustration of this scripture, 4 *Dis* p. 69—71,) the best I remember to have seen.

e *How great a man.*] This is a severe stroke upon the Jews, not only as it proves the superior dignity of Christ above the Aaronical priesthood, but shews also that God had of old a people among the Gentiles, and that there was a person among them superior to Abraham himself.

f *As*

SECT. viii.

Heb. VII. 6.

6 But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

7 And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the better.

we have now been speaking, *whose pedigree is not reckoned from them*, nor had any relation at all to the Abrahamic family, *took tythes of Abraham* himself, *and* even *blessed him who had* received *the promises*, so much celebrated in your history through every generation. *But without* 7 *all contradiction, the inferior is blessed of the superior*, rather than the superior of the inferior: so that while pronouncing this blessing upon Abraham, Melchisedec evidently acted in an higher character than the patriarch himself sustained at that time, and in that circumstance.

8 And here men that die receive tithes: but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

And again, it may farther be observed for the 8 illustration of this argument, that *here*, under the institution of Moses, *men who die, receive tythes;* the priests of that dispensation are mortal men, like their brethren; *but there*, in the case of Melchisedec, *he* [*receiveth them*] *of whom it is* only *testified* in scripture, *that he liveth*, but of whose death we have no account; and in that respect, he may be said to bear some resemblance to the ever-living, and ever-blessed Jesus.

9 And as I may so say, Levi also who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

And indeed *as one may say*[f], *by Abraham* and in 9 his person, *even Levi, who* in his posterity *received* the *tythes* of the other descendants of Israel, *was* himself *tythed.*

10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

For he was yet in 10 *the loins of* [*his*] *father* Abraham[g], *when Melchisedec met him* upon the occasion I have just been mentioning.

11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received

Now I introduce all these reflections, to lead 11 you to consider the aspect this wears as to the gospel, and the view it gives of its superior excellence in comparison of the law. And I may reason thus upon the premises, *If perfection had been by the Levitical priesthood*[h], and no more excellent atonement and intercession than theirs

f *As one may say:* ως απος ειπειν.] *Elsner* is of opinion, *(Obser. Sacr.* Vol. II. p. 350.) that this should be translated, *to say the truth;* alledging, that it is not agreeable to the respect we owe to the *apostle's* character, to suppose that he inserted those words as an apology for an assertion in itself not strictly just and exact; and he produces some passages out of the *classics* to vindicate this version. But the justness of it is largely controverted by *Raphelius. Annot. ex Herod. in loc.*

g *In the loins of* Abraham.] Christ could not be said to be so, because of his *extraordinary* descent; otherwise the argument would, I think, have been inconclusive, as it would have been proved that Christ, as well as Levi, paid tythes in Abraham.

h *Now—if perfection,* &c.] *Elsner* justly observes, *(Observ. Sacra.* Vol. II. 351.) that this is not to be considered as a consequence flowing *directly* from the verses immediately preceding, as might be concluded from the rendering of the *vulgate* and *Erasmus Schmidius*, and our *common translation:* but that it is the beginning of a new *paragraph*, or branch of discourse; and that ει μεν should be rendered, *but if*, or, which is much the same, *now if*, in support of which he produces several authorities.

SECT. viii.

Heb. VII. 11.

theirs could be expected, *(for* you know that it was *under it* that *the people received the law,* that is, it was a part of the legal appointment to which a multitude of other precepts in the ritual referred, and on which the possibility of performing them depended,) *what farther need [was there] that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedec, and* that he should *not be reckoned according to the order of Aaron?*

received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron.

12 This will draw after it a long train of extensive and important consequences; *for the priesthood being changed, there must of necessity also be a change of the law;* for as I hinted above, all the ceremonial law depended upon it: and if our regards be directed to another priest, who is not of the family of Aaron, there is then an end of the obligation to the ritual, which confined all its precepts to priests of that line, and supposed that as long as it was binding, they would always subsist and bear office. And that is now evidently the case, *for the person of whom these things are spoken, belongeth to another tribe, of whom no one appertained to the* Jewish *altar,* or had any right to minister at it. *For [it is] plain that our Lord* Jesus Christ, the only true Messiah, foretold by David in the passage I have been discoursing upon, *sprung from Judah*[i], *of which tribe Moses spake nothing* at all *relating to the priesthood* he ordained, so as to reserve any right of sacerdotal ministry to them, more than to any other tribe in Israel. *And* independent on all genealogical controversy, which the most ingenious malice could urge concerning Mary's family, *it is yet more abundantly manifest,* from the least attention to that single scripture alone which I have so frequently mentioned, *that there arises*[k] *another priest according to the similitude of Melchisedec; Who* therefore, we may assure ourselves, *is made* and constituted *not according* or in regard *to the law of the carnal commandment,* that system of ceremonial precepts

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

14 *For it is* evident that our Lord sprung out of Juda: of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after

i *Sprung from Judah.*] It may be worth remembering here, that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Chrysostom, refer to the table made at the *taxation,* in proof of this; and it may be considered whether the *apostle* does not insinuate the same reference. See Dr. *Barrow's Works,* Vol. II. p. 188. Undoubtedly he would not have spoken with such confidence, if it had not been generally allowed.

k *That there arises*] Dr. Whitby proves by many convincing authorities, that the particle ὅτι sometimes signifies *that,* as it is plain it here does.

10*f*

after the power of an endless life.

precepts which contained so many things of an external, and comparatively of a carnal nature, and which considered men as dwelling in mortal flesh, and so to succeed each other; *but according to the* undecaying *power of an* indissolvable and *endless life*[1]. *For* you will be careful to remember what *he testifieth, Thou [art] a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec:* which implieth all that I have asserted concerning Christ. Let us reflect upon it with pleasure, that he retains his priesthood for ever; and therefore is able to give everlasting efficacy to his administration, and everlasting blessings to those who cast themselves upon its protection, animated by the glorious promises which it exhibits.

SECT. viii.

Heb. VII. 16.

17 For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. 17

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our souls adore *the King of righteousness,* and *the King of peace;* submitting to him under the former title, that we may experience the peace which he gives, and which none can take away. Let us repose our confidence in *the Son of God, who without beginning of days, or end of life, abideth a priest for ever; a priest on a throne,* to confirm *the counsels of* eternal *peace* transacted between the Father and himself. (Zech. vi. 13.) To him do *all the prophets bear witness,* to him did all the *patriarchs* render humble homage, and his blessing was that which rendered *Abraham,* the father of the faithful, *blessed indeed.* He sprang from the *tribe of Judah,* and was the *Shiloh* that was to come before it ceased to be a tribe, according to the ancient oracle of dying *Jacob.* (Gen. xlix. 10.) But the honours of the *priesthood* are now transferred to, and centered in him, *not according to the law of a carnal commandment,* but the superior *power of an endless life.* Let us rejoice that his life is *endless,* and that by him *we* may likewise attain to an endless life, to an immortality of glory. The *priests* of the *Old Testament,* the ministers of the New, as well as private believers under both dispensations, *die;* but the eternally prevailing *priesthood* of *Jesus* gives us life in death, and entitles us to the hope of that glorious world, where he

Chap. vii. 2

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6

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15, 16

8

1 *Of an endless life.*] Archbishop Tillotson thinks the gospel is called *the power of an endless life* to intimate the *powerful* influence which the views of immortality proposed by it, will have upon the mind. (Vol. III. p. 407.) I have therefore kept *that* thought a little in view, though I am far from imagining it to be the chief design of the expression.

[SECT. viii.] he will put his own likeness and splendor upon us, and make us in our inferior degrees of *dignity*, immortal *kings and priests to God, even the Father: to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (Rev. i. 6.)

SECT. IX.

From what has been said above, the Apostle argues, that the Aaronical priesthood was not only excelled, but vindicated and consummated by that of Christ; and by consequence that the obligation of the law was dissolved. Heb. VII. 18, *to the end.*

HEBREWS VII. 18.

SECT. ix. I HAVE been discoursing largely on the resemblance between Melchisedec and Christ; and I may fairly argue from hence, not only the Heb. VII. 18. superior dignity and excellence of Christ, but the freedom of Jews as well as Christians, from the obligations of the ceremonial law. Let me urge it *therefore* plainly, that *there is an abolition of the former commandment* in its all extent of ritual observances, *because of its weakness and unprofitableness:* for weak and unprofitable it appears to be, in comparison of that everlasting priesthood which I have just now mentioned.

19 *For the law* of Moses *made nothing perfect*[a], *but* left in its most essential institutions, as we shall presently shew, the manifest traces and evidences of its own imperfection; whereas full provision for our pardon and sanctification, must be ascribed to *the introduction of a better hope*, by a dispensation of a far superior nature, *by which we* now under the gospel *draw near to God* in cheerful dependance upon the efficacious intercession of our

20 ever-living and glorious High Priest: A High Priest, evidently superior to any of the Aaronical line, on many other accounts, *and* we may add on this likewise, *inasmuch as* [*he was*] *not* [*constituted*] *without* the solemnity of *an oath*[b] on the part of God; intended no doubt to shew the great importance of what he was to transact.

21 *For they indeed are become priests* by a general Divine

HEBREWS VII. 18.

FOR there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did;* by the which we draw nigh unto God.

20 And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest.*

21 (For those priests were

a *The law made nothing perfect.*] Mr. Pierce includes these words in a *parenthesis:* as if the *Apostle* had said, "Since the law made nothing perfect, it could not make the priesthood so; it could not remove the guilt of sin, or give strength to obey its commands."

b *An oath.*] Which argues the *solemnity* and *importance*, and also the *immutability* of the action.

c *Better*

were made without an oath, but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;)

22 By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament.

Divine ordination, *without* the interposition of *an oath* at their investiture; *but he*, of whom we have been speaking, was set apart to his office *with an oath, by him who said unto him, the Lord hath sworn, and he will not repent, Thou* [*art*] *a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec.* Now *by so much* dignity as such an introduction to his office by the oath of God adds to him, does it appear that *Jesus* our Lord is preferable to Aaron and his sons: from whence it is natural to infer, that he *is the Surety of a better covenant*[c]; or that the covenant of which he is the great Guarantee between God and man, is more excellent than that, of which Aaron and his sons might be said to be sureties in reference to certain acts which they were to perform on the part of the people to God, and in the name of God to the people, with which promises of temporal pardon and blessings are connected; for to them alone did that covenant extend.

SECT. ix.

Heb. VII. 21.

22

23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

24 But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

And again, I may further observe that *there were many priests, because they were hindered by death from continuing* in the perpetual executions of their office. *But he, because he abideth for ever*, and is risen to a life of immortal glory in the heavens, where he shall reign as long as any can need the benefit of his ministrations, *hath a priesthood that never passeth over to another* as his successor. *From whence also* it appears, that *he is able to save to the uttermost*, that is always and completely to save, *those who* humbly *approach to God by him* as their appointed High-Priest, *always living to intercede for them* in every circumstance of their respective lives, through all successive ages and generations.

23

24

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

25

26 For such an High Priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled

Let us pause, therefore, and enjoy the comfort of so glorious a truth; *for* the more we reflect upon it, the more consolation shall we derive from it. Exactly *such an High-Priest* as this, indeed *suited us*; his character most perfectly corresponded to our circumstances and necessities, [*who was*] solemnly set apart to his office by the highest authority, and in the execution of it, entirely *holy*, *harmless* in himself, *unpolluted*

26

c *Better covenant.*] So I render διαθηκη, and as this is the most common use of the word, so here it best suits the connection.

d *Higher*

SECT. IX.

luted by others, *separate from* all defiling society of *sinners*, though mercifully conversant among them; *and* to complete all, a person of such dignity of nature, and so eminently dear to God, as to be *made higher than the heavens*[d], and all their inhabitants, far more superior to the noblest of them, than Aaron himself to the meanest Levite who ministered in the tabernacle.

Heb. VII. 26.

defiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

27 Glorious High-Priest indeed! *who had not daily necessity, as those high priests* appointed by Moses, *first to present sacrifices for his own sins, and then for those of the people:* of the former of these he never had any need, nor could there be any room *for* it; and *this* last *he did once for all, in offering himself* as a spotless and acceptable sacrifice to God. *For the law*, as is well known, *constitutes men high priests, who have infirmities* of their own, which need expiation; *but the word of the oath, which* [*reaches*] *beyond the law*[e], and of which I have so largely been speaking, [*constitutes*] to that office, *the* only begotten *Son* of God, who is *consecrated for ever* to the execution of it, and is the great substance of what they were only dim and imperfect shadows.

27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. VII. 19.

LET the *introduction of this better hope* which we receive by *Jesus Christ*, and which bringeth the greatest *perfection* of happiness to those that embrace it, fill our hearts with thankfulness to God, and with a solicitous zeal to secure an interest in it. Let us *draw near to God* under his supporting influence, and be quickened thereby to *purify ourselves from all pollutions of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God;* in firm dependence upon that great *High Priest*, whom he hath *constituted with* the solemnity of *an oath*, as the great *Surety* and Guarantee *of the better covenant.*

Ver. 20--21

God helps the frailty of our nature, by transmitting his promises to us through the hands of his *Son*, and by giving us such a proof of his gracious regards, as his incarnation and sufferings afford: in which it is certain, that God hath already done what is far more

22

d *Higher than the heavens.*] Mr. *Blackwall* (*Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 241, 242.) takes notice of this expression, as very sublime, superior to Homer's description of Jupiter upon Mount Ida: and perhaps taken from Psal. cxiii. 4, 6.

e *Beyond the law.*] Our translators render μετα τον νομον, *since the law.* But μετα often signifies *beyond.* Compare chap. ix. 3. and many other places.

more astonishing than any thing which he hath promised farther to do. And *Jesus* takes his covenant-people under his care, and graciously engages to watch over them for their good, and to communicate to them all such assistances of his grace as may be sufficient to induce them to answer their part of the engagement. SECT. IX.

He is possessed of an *unchangeable priesthood:* let us daily look 24
to him, as knowing, that in consequence of the *intercession*, which *he ever lives to make, he is* ever *able completely to save all that come* 25
unto God by him. Let us every day, and every hour, have recourse to him as the *Mediator* of our approaches to God. And let us make the thoughts of him familiar to our minds, the thought of his *sanctity*, his *dignity*, and his *love:* confiding in that *sacrifice* he hath *once for all* offered for *his people*, being above *all need of sacrificing for himself.* To conclude, while we chear and 27
strengthen our hearts with such contemplations as these, let us always consider the obligation which the character of our *High-Priest* and our Saviour lays upon us, to be ourselves *holy*, *harmless*, and *undefiled*, and to maintain a *separation from sinners*, so far as the duties of life, in the present circumstances of the world, may admit.

SECT. X.

The Apostle briefly recapitulates what he had before demonstrated of the superior dignity of Christ as the High-Priest of Christians, and farther illustrates the distinguished excellence of that new covenant which was foretold by Jeremiah as established in him, and plainly enriched with much better promises than the old. Heb. VIII. 1, *to the end.*

HEBREWS VIII. 1.

NOW of the things which we have spoken, *this is* the sum: we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens:

HEBREWS VIII. 1. SECT. X.

NOW the chief article of the things which have been spoken, in the preceding parts of this discourse, [*is this*] that *we have such a* great and illustrious *High-Priest* as hath been described, made after the order of Melchisedec, and by the oath of God himself invested with immortal honours; *who* having on earth performed all that was necessary, by way of preparation, *hath now sat down on the right-hand of the majestic throne in the heavens*, (compare chap. i. 3, note [h],) exalted by the Divine authority to rule over all things, for the glory of God, and the good of his people. And we are ever to regard him under his priestly, as well as his royal character as *a minister of holy things, and of the* Heb. VIII. 1.

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the 2

SECT. X. *true tabernacle, which not man, but the Lord* himself, *hath pitched;* a sanctuary infinitely superior to any in which human hands could be concerned in rearing, and proportionable to the boundless wisdom, power, and magnificence of God.

Heb. VIII. 2.

the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 *For every High-priest,* who ministers there, *is constituted to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore* [*it was*] *necessary that this man also,* even the glorious person of whom I speak, *should have* 4 *something to present. But* we may observe by the way, that *if he were* always to continue *on earth, he could not,* in any consistence with the Jewish institutions, *have been a priest*[a], to officiate at the temple of God in Jerusalem; *as there are* already a certain order of *priests* there, *who offer* the *gifts* of the people, *according to the law,* and it is expressly settled, that none of any other family should have access to these services; nor would it have been agreeable to the Divine schemes, that Jesus should, by extraordinary dispensation, have interfered with their pe- 5 culiar functions. These he left entirely to those priests, *who perform divine service to* an œconomy, which contains only *the example and shadow of celestial things*[b]: *as Moses was charged by the oracle, when he was about to finish the tabernacle: for see, saith he* [*that*] *thou make all things according to the model shewn thee upon the mountain;* lest an error, which may seem to thee small, should be more material than thou art aware. (Exod. xxv. 40.) Now this exactness was required in special regard to the typical representations couched under these ordinances, the particulars of which Moses himself did not 6 perfectly understand. *But he,* that is, Christ, *hath*

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle. For, See (saith he) *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained

a *He could not have been a priest.*] From hence hath the great argument been taken against Christ's performing any sacerdotal acts upon earth; and consequently against the reasonableness of considering his *death* as a *sacrifice,* though the scripture expressly declares it was so. But it is evident the sense of the words given in the *paraphrase,* which undermines all such arguments, can alone be maintained as the true one; since it is plain, that under the Jewish œconomy, though none but a priest ever ministered as such in the tabernacle, yet sacrifices were offered by special Divine appointment by *some* (as by *prophets,* &c.) who were not of that order; and being so offered, were accordingly accepted.

b *The example,* &c. υποδειγμα των επουρανιων.] Dr. *Sykes* would explain it, the *copy* of what Moses saw in the mount: as if he had said, the former was but a *copy* of the latter, and no more to be compared with it than the *shadow* to the *substance.* See *Sykes on Christianity,* p. 184. *Pierce in loc.* I rather take it in the sense generally given, for the *administration* or sketch of heavenly blessings. Dr. *Barrow* (Vol. II. p. 205,) renders it by a very expressive word, the *subindication.*

c *Finding*

obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

hath now much *nobler services allotted to him* in that heavenly sanctuary, *inasmuch as he is the Mediator even of a better covenant* than that in which the Jewish high priest mediated; *which was established upon better promises* than those of the Mosaic law: for they only referred to the blessings of a temporal Canaan, to be enjoyed by the people, while they continued obedient to its precepts, which placed them under such a special providence, as the nature of that dispensation absolutely required, and made them a spectacle to the whole world.

Heb. VIII. 6.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

This superior excellence of that œconomy which our Lord introduces, might indeed have been concluded from its being exhibited after the Mosaic: *for*, as we know God never alters but for the better; *if that first* [*covenant*] *had been* esteemed so *faultless*, as to have no remaining deficiency, *there would have been no place sought for a second;* yet we in fact see this intimation of an exception taken to it: *For finding fault with them*[c], that is, with the Jews, to whom he was addressing, *he saith* by the prophet Jeremiah, in that celebrated text which undoubtedly refers to the gospel-dispensation, (Jer. xxxi. 31,) *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.* And he expressly mentions the superior excellence of the covenant there referred to, when compared with that which was transacted on mount Sinai. For he adds there, The transaction shall *not* be *according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;* (as you well know it was while the great work of conducting them to Canaan was yet imperfect, that the law of Moses was given;) *because they continued not in my covenant, and I disregarded*

7

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

8

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

9

c *Finding fault with them.*] This is translated by Grotius and others, *finding fault, he saith to them*, and understood of *finding fault with the former covenant.* But that covenant was certainly wise and good, and adapted to the purpose for which it was designed and appointed. It seems therefore much more proper to understand it, *finding fault with the Jews*, (as God evidently does in the words preceding those quoted here, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30,) for using the proverb against which he expresses so much displeasure in Ezek. xviii. 2. And in the *words* themselves he also finds fault with them for *breaking* this covenant, though he had with so much tender care brought them out of the land of Egypt, *Raphelius in loc.* translates the words under consideration (μεμφομενος γαρ αυτοις λεγει,) *finding fault with them he saith;* agreeably to our common translation; and justifies this version by the authority of Chrysostom, a Greek father, and by two passages from Herodotus, where μεμφομενος is used with a *dative* case after it.

SECT. X.

disregarded them[d], *saith the Lord. For this* [*is*] *the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days;* that is, in the times of the Messiah, *saith the Lord; I will give my laws to their soul, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts,* in more lasting characters than those in which I wrote the commandments on the tables of stone; *and I will be unto them for a God, and they shall be to me for a people:* I will answer all the import of that high relation to them, and they shall persist in their obedience to me. *And they shall no more* have need to *teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them.* They shall have a much more certain and effectual teaching than they can derive one from another. *For I will be merciful to their unrighteous deeds*[e], various and aggravated as they are, *and their sins and their iniquities,* of what kind soever, *I will remember no more,* so as to bring them into judgment; but will pardon the most heinous offences; which were incapable of expiation under the former covenant.

Heb. VIII. 10.

11 12

13 Now I would observe in the close of this argument, that *when he saith, A new* [*covenant*] shall be made, *he hath* in effect *made the first old,* he hath, as it were, spoken of it as antiquated: *now that which is antiquated, and fallen into old age,* cannot be expected to live long. And so in like manner [*is*] that old covenant of Moses just *ready to disappear.* Divine Providence will put such a period to it ere long, as shall be remarkable in the eyes of the whole world; so that the grand apparatus which now preserves its visible form and lustre, shall be known no more.

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, *is* ready to vanish away.

IMPROVE-

d *I disregarded them.*] The quotation here is according to the *Seventy*, and by no means agrecable to the Hebrew, which reads it as we do, *though I was a husband to them, saith the Lord.* Mr. Pierce thinks the *seventy interpreters*, in their copy, either read בעלת, or בחלת, instead of בעלת, in either of which there is only the variation of a single letter, and this will justify the translation here given. Dr. Pocock maintains that the word is capable of such a translation, as it now stands in the *original.* So that they seem to agree that our English version of the *text* in question should be altered.

e *For I will be merciful.*] Some would render כי, *and thereupon*, that is, upon their being thus taught by me; or *so that*, which signification it is certain that כי sometimes hath; but here it may signify that because God hath proposed to extend his pardoning mercy to them, he thus taught them by his Spirit; and therefore I have rendered it *for.*

IMPROVEMENT.

ADORED be that grace which hath constituted and revealed this *everlasting covenant, well ordered in all things and sure; established on such promises,* as are of all that can be conceived, most valuable to sinful creatures; and especially on that, without which no other declaration could impart any comfort to such, *I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more.* With this is connected that other promise, so comprehensive of every thing that is truly valuable, *I will be a God unto them, and they shall be unto me a people. Happy* indeed *the people that are in such a case; yea, happy the people whose God is the Lord,* who are *taught by him to know him* under that character, taught by that energy of his Spirit, which *gives his law to their mind,* and *inscribes it on their heart.* There may we ever retain it engraven in living and durable characters, as a law of love, which may make obedience to every precept easy. SECT. X. Ver. 6, 12, 10

In this connection let us look with pleasure to that *High Priest, who is sat down on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,* and presides over all for the good of his people, that *minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord, not man, hath pitched!* ever maintaining an humble dependence on the sacrifice he hath offered: A sacrifice better than any of the *Aaronical* priests could present, in proportion to the degree in which the *covenant,* of which He is the *Mediator,* is nobler than theirs. The *first covenant,* wisely allayed with such a mixture of imperfection as was suitable to its being introductory to the *second,* is now *vanished,* to make way for this second and better dispensation: to this let us therefore adhere, and so doing, chearfully expect all the invaluable blessings it imparts. 1, 2, 7, 13

SECT. XI.

The Apostle illustrates the doctrine of the priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it to what the Jewish high priest did on the great day of atonement. Heb. IX. 1—14.

HEBREWS IX. 1. THEN verily the first *covenant* had also ordi-

HEBREWS IX. 1.

HOW reasonable it is to expect, that the former covenant of which I have been speaking, should give way to another and a nobler, you may easily apprehend from surveying it, SECT. xi. Heb. IX. 1.

SECT. XI.

it, and considering in comparison with it, the great things which the gospel teaches us concerning Christ, and to which I would now call your contemplations. *The first tabernacle*[a], you will *therefore* recollect, *had* certain ceremonial *ordinances of Divine service, and a worldly sanctuary:* a sanctuary made of such materials as this earth of ours could furnish out, and the center of a ritual which contained many institutions comparably low and carnal. *For the first* part of the *tabernacle was prepared* of boards and curtains, pillars and coverings, which constituted a little apartment as a kind of antichamber to the oracle; *in which* there [*was*] *the candlestick* of pure gold with its seven lamps, *and the table* of shew-bread as it was called, *and the setting on the* twelve *loaves* upon it, *which* were always to stand before the Lord; and this apartment *is called the Holy place*, in which also the golden altar of incense stood. *And beyond the second vail* was that apartment of *the tabernacle which was called the Holy of Holies*, or the most holy of all, where God was pleased to keep his special residence, and which was as his presence-chamber. *Having the golden censer*[b], in which the high priest used to burn incense on the great day of atonement, *and the ark of the covenant* so *covered over on every side with gold*, that it appeared as if it had been one mass of that precious metal; *in which* apartment, in or very near the ark[c], [*was*] *the golden pot, containing the manna* that remained incorruptible through so many ages, *and the rod of Aaron that blossomed, and the* two

Heb. IX. 1.

ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made: the first wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shew-bread; which is called the Sanctuary.

3 And after the second vail, the tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

a *The first tabernacle.*] Mr. Pierce thinks this is to be considered as connected with chap. viii. 6. and that all which intervenes is a *digression*, though a very pertinent and useful one, relating to the meliority of the *covenant* established under that *better Priest*. But I can see no necessity for this, since it may well be connected with the words immediately preceding: as if he had said, and because that *covenant* was intended but for a little while, therefore there was a great deal of external ceremony in it, fit for the puerile disposition of the persons to whom it was given. Our translators strangely supply the word *covenant* instead of *tabernacle*, whereas most *copies* read σκηνη, *tabernacle*, and that undoubtedly suits the connection best. The word we render *ordinances* is δικαιωματα, *justifications*, or ways of becoming righteous.

b *The golden censer.*] It hath been queried, why the *golden altar* was not mentioned; and some are of opinion that it may be comprehended in the word θυμιατηριον, which we render *censer*.

c *In which: εν η.*] I say, *in* or *near which*, as many good *commentators* think the words εν η may be taken in that latitude, to reconcile it with 1 Kings viii. 9. where it is said, that *there was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone*. Or perhaps εν η, *in which*, may refer to σκηνη, *the tabernacle*, rather than to κιβωτον, *the ark*, as probably Aaron's rod, which is here said to be in the same place, could not lie in the *ark*.

d *Cherubs*

SECT. XI.

two *tables of the covenant* on which the ten commandments were inscribed by the finger of God, *And over it* were *the cherubs of glory*[d], *shadowing* with their wings that golden cover of the ark which was called *the mercy seat*, or propitiatory, as to it propitiations were referred, and where God was pleased to appear in a visible symbol of his propitious and gracious presence. These were all important things in the Mosaic tabernacle, *concerning which there is not now* [*room*] *to speak particularly. And these things* 6 *being thus* prepared and *adjusted*, both in the holy and most holy place, *the* ordinary *priests went continually into the first* apartment of the *tabernacle, performing* [*their*] daily *services*, by trimming the lamps, and burning incense upon the holy altar, changing the loaves on the sacred table every sabbath, and sprinkling the blood of the victims before the vail. *But into the se-* 7 *cond* apartment *only the high-priest* [*went*] *once a year*, and that *not without* the *blood* of the sin-offering, *which he offered* first *for himself, and* then [*for*] *the sins of ignorance committed by the people*, to which sort of offences alone, and not to those presumptuously committed, the efficacy of the atonements extended.

Such was the ritual of Moses, *the Holy Spirit*, 8 by whom it was prescribed, *signifying*, by *this* difficulty of entrance, and the necessity of the incense-cloud, and the atoning blood, *that the way into the holiest* place, that is, into God's immediate presence, *was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle had its continuance*, and retained its station and use, or in other words, while the Jewish œconomy lasted; *Which*, far 9 from being the grand and ultimate scheme, [*is*] only *a* kind of allegorical *figure* and parable *referring to the* glorious displays of the *present time*[e]; *in which*, nevertheless, there is hitherto a continuance of the temple-service; so that *gifts and sacrifices are* still *offered, which* yet in the

Heb. IX. 5.

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people.

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which *was a* figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining

[d] *Cherubs of glory.*] That is, the *cherubs* that waited upon the *Shechinah*, or sensible glory of the Deity.

[e] *Referring to the present time.*] We render it, *for the time then present.* But the words εις τον καιρον τον ενεστηκοτα may certainly bear the rendering which I have given them; and I would understand it, not merely as if he had said that this similitude of comparison may be properly *used* in this present time, as to the temple at Jerusalem, which has its *holy of holies*, as the *Mosaic tabernacle* had, but that the constitution before described, was a *figurative* representation of the Christian dispensation, which at the time when the *apostle* wrote, was displayed in all its glory.

SECT. XI.

the nature of things, *are not able to make the person who performs the service perfect with respect to the conscience;* as they refer not to the
Heb. IX. 9. real expiation of guilt, but only to averting some temporal evils[f] which the law denounced on
10 transgressors. For this the Mosaic dispensation was insufficient, which in the peculiarities of it related, not to the views of another life, nor the sublimest means of preparing the soul for it; [*but consisted*] *only*[g] *in* the distinction between different kinds of *meats*, clean or unclean; *and drinks*, some of which were allowed, and others denied to priests in some circumstances, and to Nazarites in others; *and in different* baptisms, or *washings* either of the whole body, or a part of it in water, as different occasions demanded; *and* in a variety of other *ordinances* relating to the purification *of the flesh*, which were *to continue* in force only *till the time of reformation*, when things should be put into a better situation by the appearance of the Messiah himself
11 in his church. But *Christ* having now appeared, and *being become an high priest of* those *good things* which were then future, and which the church through preceding ages expected as *to come*, the obligation of these things would of course soon be superseded. Accordingly he performed his ministry *in a greater and more perfect tabernacle* above, *not made with* human *hands, that is, not* making any part *of this*
12 lower *creation*. *Neither* doth he expiate the guilt of his people *by* presenting before God *the blood of goats, and of calves*, and of young bullocks, which were the noblest sacrifices the high priest presented in the day of atonement; *but* it is *by* the efficacy of *his own blood*, which he con-

taining to the conscience.

10 *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation.

11 But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12 Neither by the blood of goats, and calves, but by his own

f Averting some temporal evils.] This in a few words expresses what I take to be of the greatest importance for understanding the *Mosaic sacrifices*; which is, that they were never intended to *expiate* offences to such a degree, as to deliver the sinner from the *final* judgment of God in another world; but merely to make his peace with the *government* under which he *then* was, and to furnish him with a pardon, pleadable against any prosecution which might be commenced against him in their *courts of justice*, or any exclusion from the privilege of drawing near to God, as one *externally* at peace with him, in the solemnities of his temple-worship. And I must desire the *reader* to examine, and digest this explication, that I may not be under the necessity of repeating it for the illustration of what is to follow.

g [*Consisted*] *only.*] The construction of the Greek is perplexed: I have given the version that seemed to me most natural; but Mr. Pierce would connect the two verses thus, *He who worshipped—with meats and drinks*; and reads δικαιωμαλα instead of δικαιωμασι, in conformity with the *Alexandrian* and other *manuscripts*; supplying αλινα ην: *which were corporeal ordinances, imposed till the time of reformation*, that is, the appearance of the Messiah.

h *Entered*

own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

continually pleads before the Father, that *he hath entered once for all into the holy place* above[h], *having obtained* [*for us*] by his perfect sacrifice, that *eternal redemption* and salvation, of which all the remissions and all the benefits procured by the ministration of the Aaronical priesthood, were but very imperfect figures.

SECT. xi.

Heb. IX. 12.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

And certainly a little reflection may convince us of this; *for if the blood of bulls and of goats*, of which I have just been speaking, when presented to God with the appointed circumstances on the day of general expiation; *and* in cases of personal pollution, *the ashes of the* red *heifer*, burnt with hyssop, scarlet wool, and other ingredients, being mingled with water, and *sprinkled on the persons* who were ceremonially *unclean, sanctifieth to the cleansing of the flesh*, and hath so much efficacy in consequence of the Divine institution, as to reconcile God to the whole Jewish people in the former instance, and in the other, to introduce persons to the liberty of approaching him in his sanctuary, which would otherwise have been denied them: *How much more* efficacious *shall the blood of Christ*[i] be, even of that Divine Saviour, *who by the* aids of the *eternal Spirit*[k], supporting the infirmities of his human nature, and animating him to the exercise of all those virtues and graces which shed such a lustre around all the infamy of his cross, *offered himself*, as a most *spotless* and acceptable sacrifice *to God?* How much more,

13

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your

14

h *Entered once.*] Hence Bishop *Pearson* infers, that Christ ascended only *once* for all into heaven, and not again and again, as the Socinians pretended. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 109.

i *How much more shall the blood of Christ.*] The argument in these words seems to consist in this: it was merely by an *arbitrary* appointment that *blood* and *ashes*, which in themselves are rather defiling, should be the methods of purification; but a *death* like that of our blessed Lord, has *in itself* a proper and mighty energy to promote the purification of the soul.

k *Eternal Spirit.*] Many have understood this of the *Deity* in general, or the *Divine nature of Christ*. But since the words may in a very good and consistent sense be referred to the *Spirit*, I could not acquiesce in any other interpretation. Bishop Fell considers them in the same light, and pertinently mentions Christ's being conceived, proclaimed, anointed for working miracles, and at last voluntarily laying down, and taking up, his life by *this Spirit*. And I have the pleasure to find Dr. *Owen, (on the Spirit, p.* 143, see also his *Exposition* on the place,) expressing himself to the same purpose; mentioning also, agreeable to the *paraphrase*, that by this Spirit Christ was *strengthened* in the exercise of that admirable faith, submission, charity and zeal, which he shewed in his dying moments.—But when this Spirit is called *eternal*, I can never think with Dr. Patrick, (on Numb. xix. 4,) that it refers to the *durable* nature of the ashes used for purification under the law; nor with Mr. *Hallet, (Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 36,) that it is opposed to the *spirit of brutes*, or relates to the *eternal* redemption purchased by Christ. It seems a plain testimony to the *eternity*, and consequently the *Deity* of the Holy Spirit.

SECT. XI.

Heb. IX. 14.

more, I say, shall that blood of his, avail to *cleanse your conscience from* the pollutions ye have contracted by your *dead*, unprofitable, and sinful *works, that ye may* freely approach, and *serve the living God* with acceptance? How surely shall it appease that consciousness of guilt, which might otherwise be so painful to us, and introduce us to present our homage in the Divine presence, with the hope of the most favourable regard.

your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 2 THE whole progress of the *apostle's* argument will lead us to reflect on the reason we have for thankfulness, whose eyes are directed, not to an *earthly sanctuary* and its furniture, splendid indeed, yet comparatively dark, mutable, and perishing; but to the *holiest of all*, the way to which is now clearly manifested. What matter of solid and everlasting joy! that whereas those *gifts* 9 and *sacrifices* were *incapable of making those perfect* who presented them, or attended upon them, and the *ordinances* of that *sanctuary* consisted only in *meats and drinks, and corporeal purifications and* 10 *ceremonies;* we by faith behold an *High Priest* of a better and 11 more *perfect tabernacle*, an High Priest who hath wrought out *eternal redemption*, and *entered once for all* into *heaven* for us! 12 *Eternal redemption!* who hath duly considered its glorious import? To him, and only to him, who hath attentively considered it, is the name of the *Redeemer* sufficiently dear. But O, what short of the possession of it, can teach us the true value! What, but to view that *temple* of God above, where through his intercession we hope to be made *pillars*, and from thence, to look down upon that abyss of misery and destruction from which nothing but his *blood* was sufficient to ransom us!

13 Let that blood which is our redemption be our *confidence*. We know there was no real efficacy in that of *bulls*, or of *goats*, or in the *ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean*. All that these things could do was to purify *the flesh*, and to restore men to an external 14 communion with God in the *Jewish sanctuary*. But the *blood of Christ* can *purify the conscience*, and restore its peace when troubled, when tortured with a sense of guilt, contracted by *dead works*, which render us unfit for, and incapable of Divine converse. To that blood therefore let us look: let the death of *Christ* be remembered, as the great *spotless* sacrifice by which we *draw nigh unto God;* and let those virtues and graces which were displayed in it, under the influences of that *eternal Spirit*, which was *given*

unto

unto him without measure, concur with that benevolence which subjected him to it for our sakes, to recommend him to our humblest veneration, and our warmest affections. SECT. XI.

To conclude, since it is so expressly said, that *the Holy Ghost signified* in some degree the great and important *doctrines of the gospel* by the constitution of the *Jewish* ritual; let us think of that ritual, whatever obscurity may attend it in part, with a becoming esteem; and peruse it with a view to that great *antitype*, who is in every sense *the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth*; to him, who by fulfilling it hath given it a glory, much brighter than that which was reflected upon it from the face of *Moses*, or the most splendid magnificence of *Solomon's* temple.

SECT. XII.

The Apostle discourses, by way of digression, on the necessity of shedding Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it. Heb. IX. 15, *to the end.*

HEBREWS IX. 15.

AND for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

HEBREWS IX. 15.

I HAVE just mentioned the offering which Christ made of himself to God by the eternal Spirit; *and* it is a subject so delightful and so important, that I must dilate upon it a little more largely. Attend to it therefore, that *he is in this respect*, and for this purpose, *the Mediator of a new* and better *covenant*[a] far preferable to that of Moses; *that death being undergone, for the redemption* and expiation *of transgressions against the former covenant*, and which could not be removed by it, *they who are called* to the engagements and benefits of this, *might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance*, to which that of Sinai had no immediate reference[b]; its promises only relating to an inheritance in Canaan, and to those temporal enjoyments which were there conferred upon those who were obedient to the Divine law: I say, it is in consequence SECT. XII. Heb. IX. 15.

16 For where a testament

16

a *Mediator of a new covenant.*] This is the only place in the New Testament, where διαθηκη can be supposed to signify a *testament* or will, rather than a *covenant*. But the *mediator of a testament* is a very improper expression; and one cannot suppose the *apostle* would play on the ambiguity of the word; I therefore think with Mr. Pierce, that it is better here to retain the usual *translation* of it.—*Redemption* in the next clause plainly signifies *purchasing* the pardon.

b Immediate reference.] For the proof of this I must refer my readers to what my learned friend Dr. Warburton has written, I think, irrefragably on this subject, in his elaborate and ingenious volumes on the *Divine Legation of Moses.*

SECT. xii.

quence of his undergoing death, that he effectually secures these blessings to us by his covenant; *for where a covenant* [*is*] answerable to
Heb. IX. 16. that which typified this of what I now speak, *it necessarily imports the death of that by which the*
17 *covenant is confirmed*[c]: *For* you know that sacrifical rites have ever attended the most celebrated covenants which God hath made with men; so that I may say, *a covenant* [*is*] *confirmed over the dead, so that it does not avail*, nor has any force at all, *while he by whom it is*
18 *confirmed liveth.* From *whence*, and on which principle we may observe, *neither was the first* [*covenant*] of which we have been speaking, I mean that of Moses, *originally transacted without*
19 the *blood* of an appointed sacrifice. *For when every command was spoken* and delivered *according to the law by Moses to all the people*, it is expressly said, that *taking the blood of calves and goats* mingled *with water, and* dipping into it a piece of *scarlet wool, and* a bunch of *hyssop*[d], *he sprinkled the book itself*, which contained the covenant, *and all the people* who were to
20 enter into it; *Saying* at the same time, *This* [*is*] *the blood of the covenant which God hath commanded with respect to you*, appointing you to declare your consent to the terms of it, as you
21 desire Divine favour and acceptance. *And the tabernacle, and all the vessels of* Divine *service*

tament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth.

18 Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.

19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people.

20 Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21 Moreover, he sprinkled likewise with blood,

c *By which the covenant is confirmed.*] Mr. Pierce would render it, *of that sacrifice which is appointed by God to pacify*; and he brings a remarkable instance from *Appian* where διαθεμενος signifies *pacifier*. He saith the scope of the *writer* requires that it should be so translated here; and accordingly in the next verse he renders it, *The pacifier can do nothing, as long as he liveth.* But I think if διαθεμενος be rendered, *he by whom it is confirmed*, the argument will be clearer. Yet I confess considerable difficulties attend both these interpretations; though the connection with what follows appears easier upon that which I have given. The *reader* will do well, if he consult Dr. Whitby upon this passage, who assigns and vindicates an interpretation much the same with that which is proposed in this *version* and *paraphrase*——The phrase αναγκη φερεσθαι, which I have rendered, *necessarily imports*, is very strong; the death must be *produced*, it must not only be *effected*, but also made *apparent*. *Elsner* hath shewn, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 361,) that the word φερεσθαι is used in a *forensic* sense, for what is produced, and proved, or made apparent in a court of Judicature.

d *Scarlet wool, and hyssop.*] It is certain that Moses, in his account of this transaction, (Lev. xvi.) does not mention all these circumstances. Probably St. Paul received them from tradition. Ceremonies of a similar kind are prescribed. Lev. xiv. 4—6; 49—52, as in *cleansing the leper*. And it is highly probable, that the sprinkling the *blood* of the *sin-offering* might be done in this method. The blood was mixed with water, to preserve it from coagulating; and perhaps to this the mixture of *sacramental* wine with water, which pretty soon prevailed in the *primitive church*, might have some intended reference. It is the opinion of Dr. Owen that the ceremony here referred to, was constantly performed on the *day of atonement*. But it is certain it is not expressly prescribed in the account given us of the *ritual* of that day.

e *No*

blood, both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood: and without shedding of blood is no remission.

vice with which it was furnished, *he also sprinkled with* the same *blood* of the sacrifices. *And* indeed *almost all things were under the law purified by blood* in their first consecration; and it was by blood that they were cleansed from pollution, whether general or special. *And* if any transgression had been committed through ignorance or surprise, yet so solicitous was the blessed God to maintain the honour of his law, and the decorum of his administration, that in case of such offences, *without shedding of blood*, where an animal sacrifice could be procured, *there was no forgiveness* of sin[e]. SECT. xii. Heb. IX. 22.

23 *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

[*It was*] *therefore necessary*, according to the Divine appointment, *that* the tabernacle, and those instruments and utensils belonging to it, which were *the copies* or imitations *of things in the heavens, should be purified by* the blood of *these* animal victims; *but the celestial things themselves, with more excellent sacrifices than they*[f], even with the sacred blood of Christ himself, which these offerings were designed to typify. 23

24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

And the expedience of this appears from the method which God hath in fact taken; *for* it is plain, that *Christ is not entered into* an earthly tabernacle, or *holy places made with hands*, though adorned with ever so much art and expence;] *which*] at best [*were*] but *the figures*, or imperfect copies, *of the true: but* he is entered *into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*, as our great High Priest, and ever-glorious and powerful intercessor. 24

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place, every year with blood of others:

Not that it was necessary *he should offer himself frequently, as the High Priest entered into the most holy place yearly* on the day of atonement, *with the blood of others*, that is, of bullocks and goats: 25

26 (For then must he often have suffered since

For then, as the Jewish sacrifice was often repeated, so *it would have been necessary* 26

e *No forgiveness.*] I look upon this as a certain proof, that the *sin-offerings* were not merely tokens of *friendship restored* between God and the offender? but that the blood was looked upon as the *consideration* on which the pardon was granted, being an acknowledgement on the part of the offerer that he had *deserved death* if God had been strict to mark offences.

f *The celestial things themselves with more excellent sacrifices.*] It may perhaps seem strange, that *celestial things* should be spoken of as needing to be *purified* and *cleansed*. But it is to be considered, that as the sacred *dwelling* and the *vessels* were esteemed to be polluted by the Israelites, who in various degrees had access to them; so *heaven* would have been, as it were, *polluted* by the entrance of such sinners as went into it, had not the blood of Christ intervened. This I think much more natural, than with Bishop Fell, to explain it of some pollutions contracted by the sin of the *angels*.

g *Conclusion*

SECT. XII.

Heb. IX. 26.

sary for him often to have suffered in many successive periods, *from the foundation of the world,* in order to the salvation of good men in their several ages and generations; which we know he did not. *But now once for all at the conclusion of the ages*[g], *he hath been made manifest for the abolishing of sin,* and wiping out its dreadful score; *by the sacrifice of himself,* that he might purchase the pardon of it, and effectually teach men to subdue it[h], when they see such a ransom paid for their forfeited lives. *And* just *as* with respect to the common lot of mankind, *it is appointed to* all *men once to die, and after that the judgment* is ordained, which fixes them in an unalterable state, without any farther revolution of life and death: *So Christ* passed through one death, no more to be subject to the possibility of it, and *having once been offered,* as the scape-goat on the great day of expiation, *to bear the* punishment due to the *sins of many* even of all his believing people, and to carry away, as it were, the guilt of them into the land of oblivion, *he shall the second time appear* to preside in that judgment which men are to undergo. And then he shall come like the high priest[i], in his richest dress, when the grand act of expiation was over, *without* any thing that wears the marks of humiliation or abasement, or resembles the form in which he came to make an atonement for *sin*[k]. And while he brings with him

since the foundation of the world:) but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.

g *Conclusion of the ages.*] So συντελεια των αιωνων is the most exactly rendered; meaning the *last of the dispensations* God ever intended to give mankind. See Vol. VII. *sect.* 160. *note* d.

h Purchase the pardon of it, and teach men to subdue it.] Dr. Harris (in his *Discourses on the principal Representations of the Messiah,* p. 252) explains εις αθετησιν αμαρτιας, *for the abolishing of sin,* of *wiping out a score,* so that it should be no longer actionable. But I think it extends to every method of *abolishing* sin, or putting it away, and may include, besides the *satisfaction* made to the Divine justice, the *subduing* it also in our own *hearts.*

i Like the High Priest.] I doubt not but there is indeed, as Limborch supposes, an allusion here to the *high priest* coming out to *bless the people* who were waiting for him in the *temple* when the great day of *atonement* was over. And as he then appeared in his *golden garments,* whereas before he had officiated in the plain dress of a common priest; and as the *trumpet* of the jubilee, on that year sounded to proclaim the commencement of that happy period; there is not perhaps an image that can enter into the mind of man more suitable to convey the *grand* idea which the *apostle* intended to convey by it, than this would be to a Jew, who well knew the grand *solemnity* to which it referred.

k *Without sin.*] Mr. *Fleming* supposes this refers to Christ's having, in that great day, the glory of the *Shechinah* upon him, of which the splendor of the richest habits Aaron and his sons wore, was but a faint shadow; and that it farther alludes to the stripping Adam of that glory which he contracted from his first interview with the *Shechinah,* as soon as he had sinned. In consequence of which, Christ appearing in the days of his flesh like one of us, without this glory, might be said to come as *with sin,* or, as it is expressed, Rom. viii. 3, *In the likeness of sinful flesh, Flem. Chris.* Vol. II. p. 301.

him everlasting terror to all that despise and reject him, he shall manifest himself *to those who have waited for him, to* complete their eternal *salvation*[1], and conduct them in their entire persons, to those regions of glory which he hath prepared for them. SECT. XII. Heb. IX. 28.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE are heirs of an *eternal inheritance*, and we owe all our expectations of it to the *Mediator* of that *better covenant*, who at the expence of his own *blood* procured *redemption* from the guilt and condemnation of *those transgressions* which have been *committed under the first covenant:* what praise do we owe to that voluntary *victim*, who made his blood the *seal* of that better covenant? O, that as all the *vessels* of the *sanctuary, and all the people* were *sprinkled* with the *blood of the sacrifices*, on that day when *Moses* entered them into solemn *covenant* with God; so our souls and all our services might be under the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus!* By the efficacy of that were the *heavenly places sanctified* and prepared for us; by that our way into them is opened: let us be daily looking up to the *Lord Jesus Christ*, as gone to *appear in the presence of God for us*, and *entered* into heaven *with his own blood.* May his death be as efficacious to subdue the power of sin *in our hearts*, as it is to expiate our *guilt* before God. Then may we look forward with pleasure to the great solemnities of *death* and *judgment*, and expect that faithful Redeemer, who though he is to come no more as a *sacrifice for sin*, will then *appear for the* complete *salvation* of all, who have obediently received him under that character, and *waited for him* according to his word. Ver. 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28

In the mean time, that we may be engaged thus to apply to him, and improve our knowledge of him to the great purposes intended; may we live in the continual views of *death*, as what is indispensably *appointed to men;* and remember that it is our certain inevitable doom. May we also consider it, as standing in a most certain connection with *judgment;* assuring ourselves, that whatever the period of time between the one and the other may be, there is no room for a *change* in our character or state. Let therefore Ver. 27

1 *To salvation:* εις σωτηριαν.] *Wolfius* is of opinion, that these words should be connected with those immediately preceding, as expressing the *view* with which they waited for the returning Saviour, namely, that they might obtain *complete salvation.* But, with Grotius, I think it preferable to connect them in this manner, οφθησεται—εις σωτηριαν, *he shall appear —to salvation.* And certainly this is much more natural, than with Beza and Erasmus Schmidius, to refer it to so remote a clause as εις το πολλων ανενεγκειν αμαρτιας *to bear the sins of many*, in order to their salvation. See *Wolfii Curæ Philologic. in loc.*

a *Shadow*

SECT. xii. therefore the thoughts of *judgment*, and its awful eternal consequences, stir us up to a diligent preparation for *death*. Let it engage us to make an immediate application to *Christ* as the great Saviour, with entire submission to his *princely* authority; for if that be disregarded, how shall we meet him as our *Judge!* For when he *appears the second time for the salvation* of his people, he will execute righteous vengeance on his *enemies;* and that vengeance can never appear *so terrible*, as when considered as coming from the mouth of *him* who was once *manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

SECT. XIII.

The Apostle returns from his digression to prove, that the legal ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience; and from thence argues the insufficiency of the Mosaic law, and the necessity of looking beyond it. Heb. X. 1—15.

SECT. xiii.

HEBREWS X. 1.

Heb. X. 1. YOU see that it is the design of all this discourse, to raise your minds from the Mosaic law to the gospel; and it is an important design, which the dearer you are to me, the more earnestly I must pursue. *For the law having*, as it were, only *a shadow*, or imperfect sketch, *of future good things*, and *not the* complete delineation, or the *very image of the things* [*themselves*[a],] *could by no means*, even *by those sacrifices*, of atonement *which they always offer yearly*[b], and are the most solemn which belong to the whole Hebrew ritual, *perfect those who come unto* [*them*,] so as to remove the moral guilt of their offences, and bring them into a state of reconciliation with God, and to that settled

HEBREWS X. 1.

FOR the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.

a *Shadow and image: σκιαν, εικονα.*] Here is an allusion, I apprehend, to the different state of a *painting*, when the *first sketch* only is drawn, and when the piece is *finished;* or to the first sketch of a *painting*, when compared with what is yet more expressive than even the compleatest *painting*, an exact *image*. I cannot be of opinion with Mr. Pierce, that *εικων, image*, here signifies the *original* from whence the delineation draught is made. It is a very unusual sense of the word; nor can I think, Rom. i. 23, sufficient to justify and support it. Besides, even under the *gospel*, we have not the heavenly blessings *themselves*, but only a clearer *representation* or revelation of them.

b *Sacrifices which they always offer yearly.*] The sacrifices offered on the day of *atonement*, being by far the most solemn of any of the expiatory kind among the Jews, are mentioned here with the utmost propriety. And this interpretation seems to supersede the necessity of following Mr. Pierce's translation, who would, by transposing the points, render it, *The law having only a shadow of good things to come —yearly, can never with the same sacrifices, which they continually offer, make the comers thereunto perfect.*

c *They*

SECT. XIII.

tled peace of conscience, which results from a sense of his favour. And indeed the very circumstance of their yearly repetition is a proof of this; for *otherwise*, that is, could they have made such a complete reconciliation, *they would have ceased to be offered*[c] any more, at least by the same persons: *because they who had performed that service, being once purified* by it, *would have had no more consciousness of sins;* but have enjoyed the efficacy of that atonement to the last moment of their lives, on applying to it on any future occasion; as we Christians do, by renewed acts of faith on our great sacrifice, if through the frailty of human nature we are so unhappy as to fall into sin. *But in them,* [*there is*] of course, as it were, *a yearly commemoration of sins*, by a yearly presentation of the atoning blood of new sacrifices in the most holy place; which shows that their efficacy is so far from extending, as that of the true expiation does, to all nations, times, and places, that it only looks back upon the year completed[d], and hath no influence, even with regard to those persons who are actually present in the temple, on any thing future.

Heb. X. 2.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered; because that the worshippers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year.

3

And indeed the reason of this is plain; *for* [*it is*] in the nature of things *impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should*, on the whole, *take away sins*, or make a real atonement to God as the great governor of the world, for the moral guilt of any transgression: though it may by Divine appointment put a stop to any farther prosecution which might proceed in Jewish courts, or any such extraordinary judgment, as the peculiar state of things among that people might otherwise require. *Therefore when* the Messiah is described in David, as *making his entrance into the world, he saith*, in those well-known words, (Psal. xl. 7.) "*Sacrifice and offering*

4 For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

4

5 Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest

5

c *They would have ceased to be offered.*] This reading is more easy and natural than that which our *translators* have followed; while they have placed this in the *margin*. It is supported by many *copies*, and adopted by the Vulgate and Syriac version.

d Looks back upon the year compleated.] I am surprised that Diodate should imagine this must have been expressly revealed to the *apostle*: I think it sufficiently appears from the tenor of the *Mosaic law*; for if the expiation was to be offered yearly for the whole people, it must include the expiation of sins remaining *unatoned* to the time of its offering; and if it were to be *repeated* the next year, it could reach no further.—But still it must be remembered, that this only referred to those *temporal* punishments which *God*, as the *King of Israel*, might have inflicted upon the whole people, if by a neglect of this *annual atonement*, they had in effect broke their *covenant*, and thrown a contempt upon his institution.

SECT. XIII.

fering thou wouldest not [*accept,*] *but a body thou hast provided me*[e], in which I may render thee a more acceptable service: *In whole burnt-offerings and sin-offerings thou hadst no complacency*, when considered in this view, and in reference to this great event. *Then I said* with the most chearful consent, "*Behold, I come; in the volume of the book*[f], which contains the ancient prophecies, *it is written of me*, that I should accomplish this service, and I delight *to do thy will, O* my *God;* for thy law in all its branches is within my heart." *Having* in effect *said above, As for sacrifice and offering*, whether they were *burnt-offerings, or sacrifices for sin, thou didst not desire* [*them*] *or take pleasure* [*in them,*] which comprehends the most material and considerable of those things *which were offered* to God *under the law; Then he said, Behold I come to do thy will, O God.* So that you see, *he taketh away the first*, that is, burnt-offerings and sacrifices, *that he may establish the second*, that is, doing God's will; pointing therein to that great act of obedience, by which the pardon of sin was to be secured, and the Divine honour most effectually promoted. *In* the execution of *which will we are sanctified*, cleansed from our sins, and recommended to the Divine acceptance, even *by the offering up the body of* our Lord *Jesus Christ once for all*, as an atoning sacrifice.

Heb. X. 6.

And this agrees with what I observed above to be the property of a true and effectual atonement

wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt-offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure:

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither had pleasure *therein*, (which are offered by the law;)

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering often-

e *A body hast thou provided me.*] After having deliberately considered the various *interpretations* which have been given of this *text*, I find none so probable as that of Mr. Pierce, who supposed that the original reading of the Hebrew which the *Seventy* follow, instead of אזנים was גוף אן; and that כרה sometimes signifies to *procure*, as well as to *dig*; and then their version will be justified, and the *apostle's* following it easily accounted for. Next to this is the solution of the ingenious and learned Mr. *Saurin*, who supposes the *Seventy* chose to explain the phrase of *boring the ear*, by that of *preparing the body for service*, as better known to those for whom the *version* was intended; and therefore preferred also by the *apostle*, who, though he directs this epistle to the Hebrews, to whom the other custom might be known, intended it for general use. *Saurin's Serm.* Vol. XI. p. 17—23. The interpretation given by *Elsner*, (*Observ.* Vol. II. p. 362,) is much to the same purpose with this of Mr. Saurin.

f *Volume of the book.*] This is, in the *Pentateuch*, the only book containing prophecies of Christ written before David's time. As if he had said, I rejoice, that I am registered in thy book as thy servant. This is the sense of Bishop Fell. On the whole, I think the *apostle* so plainly argues from this text, that it proves the psalm to which he refers to be a *literal* prophecy of the Messiah; and consequently the *twelfth verse* of it, which affords the only material argument against this interpretation, must either be explained of *those iniquities*, which, though not properly Christ's own, were laid upon him; or rather those *calamities* which he bore for the expiation of *sin.*

oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins:

ment. For *indeed every priest* of the Mosaic law *standeth daily ministering, and offering the same sacrifices often, which*, as appears from that very circumstance of the repetition of them, *can never* avail to *take away* the guilt of *sins; But* 12 *he*, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, *having offered one* ever-efficacious *sacrifice for* the *sins* of all who shall believe in him, and obey him, *hath for ever sat down at the right hand of God;* never more to stand and minister in such a manner as he has done, but answering the great character drawn in the prophet, (Zech. vi. 13,) of a priest on a throne, where royal dignity, and certain conquest, are added to his other glories; *For the rest, waiting* only *till* the appointed time 13 come, in which according to the promise we have been contemplating, all *his enemies shall be made the footstool of his feet. For by* that *one* 14 *offering* up of himself, concerning which we have been speaking, *he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified* by it, and on whom its blood is, as it were, sprinkled, and hath rendered all believers perfectly acceptable to God, and made effectual provision for raising them to a state of complete holiness, felicity, and glory.

SECT. XIII.

Heb. X. 11.

12 But this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God:

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

IMPROVEMENT.

SINCE the *shadows* are now fled away, and the *substance* is come: Ver. since the most substantial blessings are bestowed by the *gospel;* 1 let us celebrate the praises of *him* by whom we have received them; of him, who so cheerfully *presented himself* a spotless *sacrifice to God* for us. In the *body* which *God hath prepared for* 5 him, he *fulfilled all righteousness*, and made a most perfect *atonement:* in that he, *once for all*, made full *expiation* for the *sins* of his people, having no sin of his own to expiate: and O! with what *grateful* emotions of heart should we commemorate his love; reflecting that when all other *sacrifices* would have been vain, he should so readily cry out, *Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O God;* when that will of his heavenly father was, that his body should be offered in so painful and so tragical a manner! With such readiness let us too concur in every intimation of the Divine good pleasure: let us, like the *blessed man* whom *David* described, not only *fear the Lord*, but *delight greatly in his commandments*, (Psal. cxii. 1,) and labour that the *law of God* may be *inscribed* on our hearts, and the characters grow larger and deeper there. This shall *please God* better than the most costly *sacrifices*, even

SECT. XIII.

even of his own ritual; better than any whole *burnt-offering*, and *sin-offering*, though it were *an ox or a bullock, which hath horns and hoofs*, Psalm lxix. 31.

Ver. 10 May we be so *sanctified* through the *sacrifice of Christ*, according to the *will of God*, that we may approach the Divine Being with acceptance. And may we daily be *looking to Jesus* as sat 12, 13 down *at his Father's right-hand*, where he waits *till his enemies are made his footstool.* Let us likewise expect that great event in full assurance of faith. Let our affections be there where *Jesus* sits; and let us live in cheerful confidence, that the *Saviour*, in whose cause we are engaged, will finally appear triumphant over all *his enemies, and ours. Amen.*

SECT. XIV.

The Apostle urges Christians to improve the privileges which such an High Priest and covenant gave them, to the purposes of a fiducial approach to God, a constant attendance on his worship, and a benevolent love to each other. Heb. X. 15—25.

HEBREWS X. 15.

SECT. XIV.

I HAVE spoken of Christ, as having by one offering of himself, for ever perfected those that are sanctified; and this is a representation very agreeable to the word of God: for *even the Holy Ghost testifieth to us*[a] in that passage (Jer. xxxi. 33, &c.) which I have quoted above, *after having before said, This* [*is*] *the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will give my laws* to be written *on their hearts; I will also inscribe them on their minds:* my Holy Spirit shall work in them cordial dispositions humbly to practise and obey them; He adds in consequence of this, *their sins and their transgressions*, how many and aggravated soever they may have been, *I will never remember any more. But where* [*there is*] such an entire *remission of these*, as this great amnesty, this universal pardon implies, which wipes out the very remembrance of all offences, [*there is*] *no more* room for any *sacrifice for sin*, which implies that they are remembered, and remain to be expiated.

Heb. X. 15.

16

17

18

HEBREWS X. 15.

WHEREOF the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

16 This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

18 Now, where remission of these *is there is* no more offering for sin.

This

a *Testifieth to us.*] Or, as it might be rendered, *bears witness with us*, that is, *assents to*, and confirms by his testimony what I have said; in which sense the original word is used, as Raphelius hath shown by several *Greek Classics.*

b *New*

SECT. xiv.

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh;

21 And *having* an High Priest over the house of God:

22 Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

This *therefore*, my dear *brethren*, is now our happy case; and let us endeavour to enjoy and improve it aright. *Having* such *liberty to enter into the holy places by the* efficacy of this atoning *blood of Jesus:* [*Having that*] *new*-discovered *and* ever-*living way*[b], *which he hath consecrated for us through the vail*[c], *that is*, by means of *his flesh*, or of that human nature in which he hath vailed his Divine glories, and to which it ever becomes us to pay a regard in our access to God: *And* [*having*] also such *a great* and glorious *Priest over the House of God*, who most faithfully manages his Father's concerns, and bears a most tender regard to ours; Let us not stand at a distance as if God were inaccessible; but, on the contrary, *let us draw near with a sincere* and affectionate *heart, in the full assurance of faith*, supported by such considerations as these, which may well embolden us, (conscious as we are of our own unworthiness,) to make our approach unto him in the most cheerful expectation of his blessing. Only let us take care that this approach be made in a regular and proper manner, as ever we desire to meet with Divine favour and acceptance; particularly, as the water of purification was to be sprinkled on the Israelites, to cleanse them from any pollutions they might have contracted, so let us see to it that we come, *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, free from all allowed guilt and indulged sin. *And* this is indeed our case, if we are true Christians: our hearts are thus sprinkled by the purifying and cleansing blood of Jesus, as well as *our bodies* in baptism *washed with pure water*[d], intended to represent

Heb. X. 19.

20

21

22

b *New and living way.*] Dr. *Owen* illustrates this, by observing that the blood of other sacrifices was to be used immediately upon its effusion; for if it were cold and congealed, it was of no use to be offered or sprinkled: but the blood of Christ is, as it were, always warm, having the same spirit of life and sanctification moving in it. So that the way of approach by it is said to be ζωσα και προσφατος, *living*, yet, (putting it for Christ who is the *Way,*) always, as it were, *newly slain.* See *Owen on the Spirit*, p. 386.

c *The vail.*] It is well known, that the *vail* was a *curtain* separating the *holy* from the *most holy* place. The priest could not pass to the sanctuary, unless he passed through it: so Christ could not pass into heaven as our *High Priest*, till he had taken human flesh in his way; and till it had been, as it were, put aside by death. And I cannot forbear thinking, that it may further refer to the *Shechinah* being vailed by this curtain, which bore so remarkable an analogy to the Divine glory of Christ, as vailed by assuming human nature.

d *Bodies washed with pure water.*] Mr. Pierce would make this the beginning of another sentence; *and having washed our bodies with pure water*, that is, "having been solemnly devoted to God in *baptism*, let us answer the engagements of that holy ordinance by *holding fast the profession of our*

SECT. XIV.

represent our being cleansed from sin. And since we have received such benefits by the gospel which we have embraced, *let us hold fast the* Heb. X. 23. *profession of* [*our*] *hope*[e], *without* ever giving way to the pressure and agitation of any temptation, or *wavering* in a case where we have such certain and indubitable evidence; *for* we know that whatever storms and tempests may arise, *he* [*is*] assuredly *faithful who hath promised;* he will stand by to defend us, and to make
24 us more than conquerors over all. *And let us consider each other,* and reflect seriously on the circumstances in which we and our brethren are situated, that we may judge what influence we can have over them for their advantage, and may endeavour accordingly *to provoke,* and stimulate them on *to* the exercise of sincere *love, and* to a readiness *to* all *good works,* by our exhortations, and especially by our example, and by such a conduct towards them as may engage the return of their affection, and the exertion of their zeal for the general good: *Not de-*
25 *serting the assembling ourselves together*[f], for the solemn purposes of public worship, *as the manner of some* now [*is*] in order to decline that reproach and persecution which the attendance on such assemblies may draw after it; *but exhorting* and comforting [*one another*] as much as we can; *and* this *so much the rather, as ye see the day approaching*[g], that awful day, in which we must appear before the tribunal of God, and that day of vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which Christ hath described as so terrible an emblem

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he *is* faithful that promised.)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is;* but exhorting *one another;* and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

our faith, &c. considering that *he is faithful* to the engagements he was pleased to seal unto us by it." But I think the sense will be very easy and intelligible, if it be connected with the preceding words, as referring to the custom of *washing* their bodies in clean water, before they went to worship at the *temple,* especially upon their solemn days.

e *Profession of* [*our hope.*] Instead of ελπιδος, *hope,* our translators read πιστεως, *faith,* upon the authority only of a single *manuscript.* See Dr. *Mills in loc.*

f *Assembling ourselves together.*] Mr. Pierce is of opinion, that when the *apostle* adds, *as the manner of some is,* he intends to blame the conduct of the Jews, who on account of their old prejudices against the Gentile converts, absented themselves from the assemblies into which they were admitted; and perhaps also to censure a similar behaviour in the Gentile converts arising from prejudices they had newly contracted against the Jews. And he imagines this, in some measure, is intimated by the use of the word επισυναγωγη. (Compare 2 Thess. ii. 1.) But I think the account given of the ground of this caution in the *paraphrase,* is on the whole much more certain.

g *Day approaching.*] They knew that the day of Christ's final judgment, being certainly future, came nearer and nearer. And from what Christ had said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, as to happen in the lives of some who had been present with him about thirty years before the date of this epistle, (compare Mat. xvi. 28,) they might infer that *that* was now near, though they should not have been able to trace it up into its causes, or to calculate the exact time.

blem of it. And let none, who would not share with the enemies of Christ in the destruction which shall be poured out upon them, abandon his people now, and basely betray that cause and interest, by which none shall on the whole be losers, whatever they may for the present suffer on its account. SECT. XIV. Heb. X. 25.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can be more desirable than to *approach to God!* what more effectually encourage that approach, than the consideration which the *apostle* here urges: *the new and living way* which this great *High-Priest hath consecrated!* Let us then see to it that we thus approach in the way of his own appointment. But if we desire acceptance, let us attend to the strength of our *faith*, and the *purity* of our *consciences;* that inward purity, without which our *baptismal* washing will stand us in little stead. To establish us in a resolution of retaining the *profession of our faith and hope*, amidst all the attempts that may be made to wrest it out of our hands, let us often reflect on the importance of those *promises* we have received, and the infallible *fidelity* of that God, who hath condescended to enter himself into such engagements. Let the *community* of that blessed hope which these sacred engagements afford, unite us in the bonds of the most affectionate *love.* Instead of watching over each other for evil, *let us consider one another's* circumstances with the most friendly and compassionate eye. And whatever we behold of necessity or distress, let us immediately be instigated and quickened, kindly to attempt relief and assistance; that *every one* may be, as it were, in a confederacy against the evil by which *any one* may be attacked. Ver. 22 22 19, 20 22 23 24

Much will this benevolent disposition be promoted, by a diligent attendance on the *ordinances* of religious worship; and much is it to be lamented, that it is the *manner of so many* to *forsake them*, even the *assemblies* which are honoured with the promise of the Divine presence; a promise, to the accomplishment of which *thousands* can bear testimony. Let us guard against so ungrateful and pernicious a neglect; and set ourselves to promote as far as possible, *mutual edification; and so much the rather, as we see the day approaching;* that solemn day, when all our opportunities in this world being come to a period, we must render up an account of all. It is a day, in which *God will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good or evil:* let us therefore *give all diligence* to prepare ourselves for it; and remember how happily the *ordinances* of public worship are calculated to promote that preparation. 25

SECT. XV.

The Apostle enforces his exhortation steadily to adhere to their Christian faith, by reminding them of the extremities they had endured in its defence, and of the fatal consequences of apostacy. Heb. X. 26, *to the end.*

SECT. XV.

Heb. X. 26.

HEBREWS X. 26.

I HAVE urged you to a steadiness and courage in the profession of the Christian faith, and have cautioned you against neglecting those acts of public worship by which it is professed, on any consideration whatsoever. And I must continue to inculcate the caution with the greatest seriousness: *for if we sin wilfully* [a] and presumptuously by apostatising, *after having received the knowledge of the truth* with such incontestable evidence and power, *there remaineth yet no more sacrifice for sin* [b]; nor is it possible to find any atonement that shall be efficacious, after having thus ungratefully and wickedly disowned
27 that which God had appointed. *But* on the contrary, all that remaineth is *a certain fearful expectation of the judgment* of God, *and* of his *fiery indignation, which is* just *ready to devour the adversaries* of his gospel, and shall in a very little time be poured out upon them in all its terrors.
28 This we might easily infer from the nature of things, even though we had not been so expressly warned of it in the word of God. For if *any one*, of whatever order and dignity, *who set at nought the law of Moses* [c], by any presumptuous trans-

HEBREWS X. 26.

FOR if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He that despised Moses' law, died without

a *If we sin wilfully.*] The emphasis of the *apostle's* argument must lead us to interpret this of *apostacy from Christianity.* But as Diodate well observes, it might perhaps be expressed in this more *general* manner, to intimate how carefully we ought to guard against *every degree* of *wilful sin*, lest it should lead to that dreadful conclusion.

b *No more sacrifice for sin.*] This plainly intimates, as Dr. *Bates (Harm.* p. 293) well observes, that God will not pardon sin without *some sacrifice* or satisfaction; else the argument would be inconclusive.

c *Set at nought the law of Moses.*] This evidently alludes to that very important precept, Numb. xv. 30, 31, which doomed to *certain death* every one who offended with *an high hand;* that is, who was guilty of any *wilful*, deliberate, and presumptuous sin, whether in matters great or small; though a plea of ignorance or inconsideration was allowed where the rebellion and presumption was not made apparent by any *overt-act.* And this was the foundation of the *sin-offering*, which was in some degree analogous to the smaller punishment inflicted among us, for a crime, in other circumstances, *capital*, where *benefit of clergy* is sought and admitted.

d *Trampled*

out mercy, under two or three witnesses:

transgression of it, though that transgression might in itself seem ever so small, *died without mercy* [*on the evidence of*] *two or three witnesses*, and was excluded any benefit from those sin-offerings which were appointed for offences of ignorance and inconsideration: *Of how much* 29 *severer punishment do ye suppose he shall be counted worthy, who hath* not merely insulted a faithful servant, but even *trampled upon*[d] *the Son of God*, and who hath not only slighted the method of reconciliation *and* purification which God hath appointed for lower purposes, but *hath accounted the* sacred *blood of the covenant, by which he was sanctified*[e], and solemnly set apart to the service of God, *a common* or an unclean *thing*, like the blood of a malefactor justly executed for his crimes? Now this he certainly doth who rejects the gospel; which cannot possibly be done without the greatest imaginable outrage to the memory of its Divine Author, who, had he not indeed been the extraordinary Person he professed himself to be, would deservedly have been reckoned among the most detestable of impostors. *And* such an offence is in present circumstances the most aggravated, as it is plain, that he who commits it, has *offered* the most *contemptuous injury to the Spirit of grace*, by whose miraculous and saving operations the truth of the gospel is demonstrated, to such a degree, that the highest blasphemy against him must virtually be expressed by such a conduct as we here suppose.

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Heb. X. 28.

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense saith the Lord. And again,

Avoid therefore all approaches to this with 30 the most solicitous care, *for* the Divine justice is not to be trifled with; as *we know him that hath said*, (Deut. xxxii. 35, 36.) *Vengeance* [*belongeth*] *to me. I will render recompence, saith the Lord; and again, The Lord will judge his*

d *Trampled upon.*] As it appears to me that this is a description of a case that could only occur where what was properly *the sin against the Holy Ghost* was committed, that is, ascribing the miracles wrought by his power to *magic*, and the operation of *demons*, I have paraphrased these words agreeable to that principle.

e *By which he was sanctified.*] As it could not on any principles be certainly inferred, that every one who thus *apostatized* from Christianity had been truly *renewed*, I think it very apparent, that this *sanctification* must only refer to his being *externally set apart*, or consecrated to God; though I will not certainly say, how far it may, as Bishop *Hoadly* has thought, refer to the *sacramental wine* representing *the blood of the covenant*. *Hoadly on Episc.* p. 453. Some have interpreted it, of the *blood* whereby *Christ* was *sanctified*, or dedicated by God as a *High Priest*. Compare John x. 36; xvii. 19. But the former sense seems to me more natural.

f *The*

SECT. XV.

his people[f]; and if he vindicate and avenge the injury done to them, he will much more severely animadvert upon those which are offered to his Spirit and his Son. Now surely you must immediately be sensible, that [*it is*] *dreadful* indeed *to fall into the hands of the living God;* who living for ever, can for ever punish, in what degree he pleases, the wretched creatures, who have made themselves the objects of his final displeasure.

again, the Lord shall judge his people.

Heb. X. 31.

31 *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 *But* I humbly hope, you will be delivered from so terrible a ruin; and that you may, I will lead back your thoughts to former events, which if duly considered, may be very instructive, and may prove the means of establishing you in your resolution of adhering to the gospel. And I must particularly urge you to *call to remembrance the former days, in which having been enlightened*[g], with the knowledge of Christianity, and solemnly engaged in the profession of it by baptism, *you endured a great contest of sufferings*[h], struggling and contending as for your lives, or what indeed was much more valuable: *Partly as ye were made a public spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions,* like men exposed on a theatre as infamous; *and partly as ye were made partakers with those who were so treated,* and most affectionately appeared in the defence of the Divine cause, at the greatest hazard as well as expence.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions:

33 Partly while ye were made a gazingstock, both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

34 And indeed I have reason to speak this upon my own knowledge *for ye sympathized with me in my bonds; and ye took the plunder of your goods* not only with patience but *with joy; knowing in yourselves that you have,* upon the security of the

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have

f *The Lord will judge his people,* &c.] The connection seems plainly to require this interpretation; and it agrees very well with the purpose for which it is here introduced. Very few *commentators* have considered it in this view; yet since I wrote this, I find Mr. *Cradock* (*Apost. Hist.* p. 387,) gives it the same sense. And *Raphelius* (*Annot. in loc.*) hath produced a passage from Xenophon, in which the original word κρινει, will *judge,* is used to signify *vindicating,* or pronouncing sentence in favour of.

g *Having been enlightened.*] By some this is understood of *baptism;* and it is certain the *fathers* use the phrase in that sense. But I see no reason from *scripture,* for limiting it to that interpretation; or supposing, as Diodate himself does, there was any efficacy in *baptism* to *enlighten,* any more than to *regenerate.* Though as it was indeed the ordinance by which persons were solemnly entered into the list of those who were in the main, and in the judgment of charity *enlightened* and *regenerated,* my respect for the opinion of so many eminent persons, ancient and modern, has determined me to hint at the sense they have generally given to it in the *paraphrase.*

h *A great contest.*] This is the emphatical signification of the word αθλησιν, which gives a view of their *courage* and *bravery* very proper for his purpose, while he was thus commending and animating them.

have in heaven, a better and an enduring substance.

the gospel-promises, *a* far *better, and an enduring substance in the heavens,* where eternal riches and felicity await you, when all the possessions of earth are lost, and all its sorrows come to a perpetual period. SECT. XV. Heb. X. 34.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

Let the remembrance of these things *therefore* animate you to persist in such heroic resolutions; and *cast not away that confidence of yours,* and that free and courageous profession of it, *which hath* so *great* and glorious a *recompence* entailed upon it; even that *of* eternal life and happiness, which the Divine goodness will bestow as a gracious *reward* on all who thus maintain it. 35

36 For ye have need of patience; that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

It will indeed be necessary, that in order to secure it, you should take up a firm and vigorous resolution; *for ye have* still *need of* continued *patience, that having done the will of God,* during this short state of probation here, *ye may receive* and inherit *the promise* of life and salvation, to which ye have already expressed such a firm regard. 36

37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come; and will not tarry.

And I hope you will still go on to maintain the glorious cause; for it is but *yet a very little time*[i], *and* as God declared by the prophet Habakkuk, though he supposes he might for a while tarry, (Hab. ii. 3,) *he that cometh,* he that is known by that illustrious title of the Comer, even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, on whom our eyes and our hopes are fixed, *will come* to the rescue of his people, *and he will not delay* beyond the period which his wisdom and faithfulness have marked out. He will come and open those important scenes, which shall not only conclude our labours and sufferings, but abundantly repay them all. 37

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But in the mean time, as it is there added, *the just shall live by* his *faith,* so we are assured by the repeated testimony of the word of God, that the truly good man shall by firm faith in the Divine perfections, promises, and grace, obtain justification and comfort, life and happiness. *Yet if he draw back*[k], *my soul,* saith the Divine oracle, *shall have no complacency in him:* a total apostacy would expose even the best of men to the Divine displeasure and abhorrence; as former experiences 38

i *Yet a little time.*] Some would render it, *a little, a very little time.*—It has been observed, that ερχομενος, *the Comer,* is a title given to the Messiah, Mat. xi. 3.

k *Yet if he draw back.*] We render the phrase in Habakkuk, *lifted up.* And it is observable, that the alteration of a *single letter* changes the reading into this sense in which the *Seventy* have taken it.—The original word υποστειληται properly signifies *to sneak* or *to slink away.* Acts xx. 20; Gal. ii. 12.

SECT. XV.

experiences of religion would render the guilt of such apostacy more aggravated. *But* blessed be God, we have a chearful hope of being preserved from so terrible a state; for *we are not of them that draw back to* such dreadful *destruction, but of them that* go on amidst all opposition still to *believe;* and sustained by Divine grace, will persevere in that happy way, *to the* preservation and complete *salvation of the soul.*

Heb. X. 39.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 26 WE see the dreadful consequences of *sinning wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth:* how diligently should we guard against every, even the least appearance of it. Should we fall into so great an evil, there would *remain no more sacrifice for sin;* and O how dreadful, to lose our part in that great sacrifice, 27 and be consigned over to *a certain fearful expectation of wrath and fiery indignation!* but blessed be God, it is not yet our case. It is not every wilful sin which thus seals up the wretched soul to condemnation; for who then could *hope* for heaven? or who in the utter despair of heaven, could *enjoy* this world? may we not say who could *endure it?*

If we would avoid this dreadful doom, let us guard against every approach toward any thing which might be interpreted 29 *treading under foot the Son of God, or doing despight unto the Spirit of grace.* On the contrary, let us ever retain the most reverent affection for the *Son of God*, and ever cherish the influences of the *Spirit.* So shall we avoid the threatened vengeance, and 31 escape that infinitely *dreadful* thing, *the falling into the hands of the living God.*

To have experienced in any degree the power and efficacy of religion, is the great preservative against *apostacy.* They who 32 have already, like those believing *Hebrews*, made great *sacrifices* to their *conscience*, ought to feel the force of the obligation. The struggles through which they have already passed, the *combats* they have already maintained, should have a powerful influence on their future resolution, that they may not stain the lustre of their former victories.

If such trials be appointed for us, may our *faith* be proportion- 34 ably strengthened; that we may *take joyfully*, not only *the spoiling of our goods*, but the torture of our bodies; *knowing that we have in heaven a better and more enduring substance* than worldly wealth, and a far more glorious abode than these tabernacles of 36 clay. Let the *recompense of reward* be kept continually in our view;

view; that thereby that *patience* may be supported, of which we ever stand in such evident *need*, that *after we have done the will of God, we may* go to *inherit the promises.* SECT. XV. Ver.

Let the certain and speedy approach of *him that is to come*, daily comfort us, and confirm the faith by which we live; and let us still pour out our fervent supplications before God, that we may not *draw back*, which if we do, it will be infinitely fatal. Then instead of *beholding us with complacency, God's soul will abhor us;* and that abhorrence will be proportionable to our violated engagements, and dishonoured profession. *Perdition* pursues our retreat. Let every consideration therefore, of honour, of gratitude, of interest and of safety, concur to urge us on, and to support the steadiness of our faith, till we receive the glorious crown of it, in *the* complete *salvation of our souls.* 37 38 39

SECT. XVI.

The Apostle enters on a discourse, in which he proposes to the Hebrews, illustrious examples of faith, which had appeared in holy men mentioned in their scriptures, and particularly in Abel, Enoch, Noah; and Abraham and Sarah. Heb. XI. 1—16.

HEBREWS XI. 1.

NOW faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

HEBREWS XI. 1.

I HAVE spoken of the faith by which the just shall live; and that I may excite you to cultivate that blessed principle more and more, let me *now* enter into a more distinct consideration of it, and set before your eyes, O ye believing Hebrews, some glorious examples of it, with which your sacred history abounds. To consider it then in its nature; *faith is the confident expectation*[a] *of things hoped for*, upon the security of the Divine promise, and *the* powerful *conviction*[b] *of things* which are *not seen;* but of whose certainty and importance there is such a full persuasion, that they act upon the mind, in a great measure, as if they were present. SECT. XVI. Heb. XI. 1.

To

a *Confident expectation.*] Compare 2 Cor. ix. 4; Heb. iii. 14; where the word ὑποστασις, is used in this sense; and Raphelius has confirmed it by some pertinent quotations from Polybius.

b *The* powerful *conviction of things not seen:* ελεγχος των βλεπομενων.] Ελεγχος, it hath been observed by many learned men, and particularly by *Raphelius in loc.* is a strict *proof* or *demonstration*, that is, saith Mr. Hallet, such a kind of reason and argument, as both *convinces* the understanding, and *engages* a man to *act* according to that conviction. Accordingly I have rendered it by the word *conviction*, which I think properly expresses the *apostle's* meaning.

c *That*

SECT. XVI.

To this I would excite you, by considerations peculiarly suited to your own case, as the children of the patriarchs; *for by it the* illustrious *elders obtained an* [*honourable*] *testimony* to their character, and it lay at the root of many of the most glorious things they have ever done.

Heb. XI. 2.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 *By faith we understand that the worlds were adjusted by the word of God*[c], and the several revolutions of them directed by the operations of his secret providence, *as* the whole universe was at first created by his power, wisdom, and goodness, and *the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear*[d]: it is certain no visible cause could produce these things, which would be in effect to suppose them to have produced themselves; we therefore by faith refer them to a Divine invisible original.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear.

4 And this happy and sublime principle hath wrought even from the beginning of the world, and animated good men to actions most pleasing to God, and honourable to themselves. It was, for instance, *by faith* that *Abel offered to God a greater* and more acceptable *sacrifice than Cain*[e]; *by*

4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained

c *That the worlds were adjusted by the word of God*] As the original word is αιωνες, I was once inclined to have rendered it, *the* various *ages of the world were adjusted;* and I have included this sense in the *paraphrase*. But it does not so evidently appear, that the consequence, relating to *things not being made by those that appear*, could be deduced from that principle; I therefore conclude upon the whole, that this is an instance where αιων signifies *world;* as it is often translated in the New Testament. Bishop *Pearson* would translate it, *were made of things which do not appear*, that is, made out of *nothing*, without any pre-existent matter, before God created the worlds. *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 58.

d *As—the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear: εις το μη εκ φαινομενων, κ. τ. λ.*] Our translators have rendered this clause, *So that the things which are seen*, &c. But this does not seem to be sufficiently agreeable either to the original, or to the design of the *apostle;* which was not to deduce the sentiment contained in the latter clause as an inference from the former; but rather to establish the position in the first part of the verse, by the principle laid down in the latter. Accordingly, I have given it this turn in the *paraphrase*, and have taken the liberty to translate εις το, &c. *as*, which clearly expresses, I apprehend, the *apostle's* intention. The construction of Rom. iv. 16, is somewhat similar to this; *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace, δια τουτο εκ πιστεως ινα κατα χαριν*, that is, "that it might *appear* to be of grace, as we have already proved it is." The *apostle's* intention was, by the latter clause as an incontested principle to establish what he now wanted to prove, namely, that *justification* was by *faith;* and this he does from the consideration of its being by *grace*. It may be proper to consult Mr. *Hallet* on Heb. xi. 3, *note* q. who refers to Eph. i. 12; and 1 Cor. x. 6. where the *apostle's* words εις το, &c. cannot signify any thing but *to the intent that.*

e *A greater and more excellent sacrifice.*] A late ingenious writer, Mr. *Kennicott*, (in his *Two dissertations on the Tree of Life, and the Oblations of* Cain *and* Abel, page 197,) has inferred from the word πλειονα θυσιαν, which may be rendered a *greater* or *fuller sacrifice*, that Cain contented himself with presenting only the *mincha*, or bread-offering, without a *victim;* whereas Abel sacrificed both, and by presenting a *lamb*, shewed his faith in the great sacrifice of the *lamb of God.*—After all that has been offered to the contrary, I must think that the *Divine original of sacrifices* is strongly insinuated in this place.

f *Dead,*

tained witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead, yet speaketh.

by means of which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous; God, by the visible tokens of his favour, *bearing witness to his gifts*, which he presented on the altar; *and by it he being dead, yet speaketh*[f]; and recommends to us in all ages that regard to the great atonement, which he expressed by bringing an animal sacrifice, while Cain contented himself with the vegetable products of the ground. And though Abel became the early victim of Cain's rage, yet that circumstance, in conjunction with the declaration he received of the Divine acceptance and favour, is very instructive, in that it affords so powerful an evidence of a future state.

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Heb. XI. 4.

5 By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

By faith the celebrated patriarch *Enoch was*, 5 in a miraculous manner, *translated* from among men; so *that he should not see death; and he was not found*[g] any longer among the inhabitants of this lower world, *because God had translated him* to the celestial regions, in a manner before altogether unexampled, nor ever since equalled among mortals, but in the single instance of Elijah. And God thus translated him, not only because he had a regard for his character, but because he would by such an interposition, give a visible and very important lesson to others, to seek and secure his favour by the exercise of such a disposition. *For before his translation, he obtained witness that he pleased God:* preceding tokens were given of God's favourable regards to him; and that character is expressed by the sacred historian when it is said, (Gen. v. 24,) that Enoch walked with God; that is, he maintained a constant regard to him, and received the indication of his favour; so that there subsisted a holy intercourse and friendship between God and Enoch. *But without* a sincere *faith*, 6 as the great principle of action [*it is*] absolutely *impossible to please* [*him;*] *for he who approacheth to God*, and pretends to walk with him[h], *must*,

6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please him: for he that cometh

f *Dead, yet speaketh.*] Some would render it, *And for this they say he died*, that is, there is a tradition that he was massacred by Cain, in a dispute about the recompense of a *future life*, which faith proposes. *Saurin's Sermons*, Vol. IX. page 54. I rather think it refers to the *testimony* borne, as it were, to a *future state* by his story, as he was so excellent a person, and visibly approved by God, yet left to suffer by the cruelty of his wicked brother. Some would render λαλειται, *he is spoken of* to this day, as a person of most eminent piety and goodness.

g *Was not found.*] The circumstances of his *translation* are not mentioned; but some have thought this intimates he was *privately* translated, and sought for, as Elijah afterwards was, 2 Kings ii. 17.

h *Approacheth to God*, and pretends to walk with him.] Raphelius hath shewn, that the original word προσερχομενον is applied

SECT. XVI.

must, as the foundation of that intercourse, firmly *believe that he exists, and* [*that*] *he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, and will bestow some peculiar and important blessings upon them. For where there are no such expectations as these, the soul cannot be animated to the labours and struggles of a truly religious life.

Heb. XI. 6.

cometh to God, must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

7 *By faith* the patriarch *Noah*, the second common ancestor of mankind, *being admonished by a Divine oracle, concerning things which were not yet seen*, and things of such a nature, that no one had ever seen or heard of any thing parallel to them, the dissolution of the world by a flood, and the destruction of all its inhabitants, believed and revered the awful threatening. And *being impressed with* a pious, and in that connection, most rational *fear* of the Divine judgments, with immense labour and cost, amidst all the insults of prophane and wicked men, *prepared an ark*, which God taught him to build *for the salvation of his house* and family; *by* means of *which he condemned the* unbelieving *world*[i], by bearing a public and convincing testimony against them. *And* thus *he became heir of the righteousness which is* obtained *by faith*[k]: he was pronounced by God a righteous person, though his character was not absolutely free from imperfections, and became by divine grace entitled to the promise of eternal life, of which his temporal deliverance, though so amazing, was only an emblem.

7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 *By faith*, that illustrious patriarch *Abraham*, from whom you justly esteem it a peculiar honour and happiness to be descended, *being called* by the God of glory, who appeared to him, *to go out*, from his Father's house and native land, *to a* distant *place, which* God promised that

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive

plied in the *Greek classics*, to *coming to God by prayer*; and it is used in chap. x. 1. 22; and xii. 22, 23; for *approaching* to God in any act of *Divine worship*. He therefore justly observes, that it may here be taken in a larger sense, and refer to that steady course of piety and virtue, which is implied in *pleasing God*, or walking with him, as in the former verse Enoch is said to have done; and which in the preceding clause, it is declared to be impossible for any one to do without faith.

i *Condemned the world.*] It is plain that here, as in many other places, a person is said to *condemn* those against whom he furnishes out matter of accusation, in which view Titus iii. 11, may be understood. See the *note* there.

k *Heir of the righteousness.*] Bishop *Cumberland* observes, that Noah is the first to whom the name of *righteous man* is applied in scripture. *Cumb. Orig. Gent.* p. 418.

receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

that *he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed* without disputing or murmuring, *and went out, though he knew not* at all *whither he was going*, or to which part of the world he was to steer his course, humbly resigning himself to Divine Providence to mark out his journey and his abode. *By faith, he sojourned* all the remainder of his days *in the land of promise*, when he knew it to be so, *as [in] a strange country*, without having any property there, unless it was that of a sepulchre towards the close of his life; *dwelling in tents*, easily moved from one place to another, some part of the time *with Isaac and Jacob*[1]; who, in their succession, were *heirs with him of the same promise*, and depositaries of it, yet led the same kind of wandering life. But he passed from place to place with cheerfulness; *for he expected* at length to be led on to *a city*, and that not such an one as he had left his native land, or such as he saw in Canaan, or even in Egypt, grand and populous as some of their buildings were; the object of his joyful and confident expectation, was that city, *which* alone *hath* firm and immoveable *foundations*, in comparison with which they were but like a frail tabernacle; a city, *of which God [is] the builder and former*, who drew and executed the grand plan, and laid out upon it all the richest ornaments, which might raise it to a magnificence, worthy of his own abode, and the inheritance of his beloved children.

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Heb. XI. 8.

9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

9

10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

10

11 Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

By faith, Sarai herself, notwithstanding some mixture of suspicion, at length, as the worthy consort of such an husband, and worthy mother of such an offspring, *received strength for the conception of seed, and brought forth a child beyond the* due *time of age* for such a purpose, when she was ninety years old, and in the course of nature absolutely incapable of being a mother; *because she accounted him who had promised, to be* the *faithful* and Almighty God, who could with infinite ease accomplish an event, which then seemed to be, and indeed was unparalleled.

11

12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him

Therefore by this mighty principle of faith in her, and in Abraham, *there sprang even from*

12

1 *With Isaac and Jacob.*] It is plain from the account of the lives of these *patriarchs*, that Jacob was born fifteen *years* before Abraham died; and the oracle given to Isaac before the birth of his children, would sufficiently intimate to Abraham that he was the *heir* of the promise.

SECT. XVI.

from one father, *and he in this respect*, as it were, *dead*, [*a posterity*] *in multitude as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore innumerable*[m], according to that Divine promise, which carried its efficacy into so many remoter ages, and retains it even to this day.

him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable.

Heb. XI, 12.

13 Now *all these* worthy and excellent persons, of whom I have here been speaking, *died in faith, not having received the* blessings exhibited in the *promises; but having seen them afar off, and having been* fully *persuaded* [*of them*,] *and embraced* [*them*] with the most cordial affection, and greatest ardour of mind, *and having*, through the whole course of their lives, *confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on earth;* as we know that these holy patriarchs, and some of their most eminent descendents did. (Gen. xxiii. 4; xlvii. 9; 1 Chron. xxix. 15; Psal. xxxix. 12; cxix. 19. 54.)

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14 *For they who say such things* as these, and speak of themselves as strangers and pilgrims, *plainly express that they seek a country*[n], different from that in which they dwell, when they use such language.

14 For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.

15 *And* as for these excellent men, *if indeed they had been mindful of that* country *from which they come out, they might* sure *have had an opportunity of returning* to it; for they were a considerable body, and they might have marched back without the probability of meeting with any resistance, and might have expected a subsistence among the relations of their family, who were themselves in a prosperous state, and often expressed on proper occasions, their regard to these

15 And truly if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned:

16 their illustrious kinsmen. *Now therefore* it appears, *that they were desirous of a better, that is, an heavenly* [*country*[o];] for there was no earthly country, which they seem to have been pursuing. And indeed this is the great excellence of their character, to be governed by such views

16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly; where-

[m] *In multitude as the stars of heaven*, &c.] Mr. *Hallet* observes here a great propriety in the *apostle's* saying, that *they should be in multitude as the stars of heaven*, and *as the sand of the sea-shore innumerable*: there being an impossibility of numbering the latter, whereas the former, since they have been reduced into constellations, have been numbered with a considerable degree of exactness. See *Hallet in loc.* where he endeavours to account, consistently with this observation, for Psal. cxlvii. 4, *He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names*, as if this were the peculiar prerogative of God.

[n] *Seek a country*: πατρίδα.] The original word is very emphatical; it signifies, as it were, a *native country*, or a country in which their *father* dwelt, and is opposed to that in which they were *strangers* and *pilgrims*.

[o] *Better country, that is, an heavenly.*] The argument, according to the turn I have given it, is much the same with that which our Lord urges, Mat. xxii. 32.

wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

views; *therefore God* determined to bestow this happy land upon them, and he *is not ashamed to be called their God*, in such a peculiar manner, as he has assumed the title, *because he hath prepared them* such *a city* as they sought; whereas if he had done nothing more for them than he did here upon earth, it would have been beneath his dignity to have professed that relation; as the title naturally imports something great and excellent, far beyond what these patriarchs received, and indeed what any can possibly receive in this mortal and transitory life. SECT. XVI. Heb. XI. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET the many glorious *examples of faith*, which are here set before us, animate our souls to imitation, and excite in us a generous desire of acting upon that noble and sublime principle, *without which it is impossible to please God.* And O, may what we call *our faith* be not merely a speculative and ineffectual assent to the truth, even of the most weighty propositions; but a *firm persuasion* of their certainty, and a deep conviction of their importance, that we also may *obtain a good report.* Ver. 6 1 2

May we believe in God, as the *former* and support of universal nature, as most assuredly *existing*, and as most bountifully *rewarding all that seek him* with sincerity and *diligence.* So shall our *sacrifices* be acceptable to him, as those of *Abel* were, while with him we look to that great sacrifice and *atonement*, of which his victim was the appointed representation. Like *Enoch* we shall then be animated to *walk with God*, and favoured with Divine intercourse and communications. And though we cannot expect a *translation* like his, which should exempt us from the common lot of mortality, we shall be secure of admission into the *paradise of God* above, and in due time shall ascend to it in our complete persons. We shall then, like *Noah*, find our safety in the midst of a dissolving world, and while sinners are condemned, be found *the heirs of righteousness.* 3 6 4 5 7

While we wait for this happiness, let us endeavour to approve ourselves the genuine *children of Abraham, the father of the faithful.* Ever attentive to the *Divine call*, may we in *obedience* to it, be willing *to go forth, though we do not* particularly *know whither;* and with an intrepidity like his, may we even be ready to exchange *worlds*, at the command of God, ignorant as we are of what lies beyond the grave; thinking it enough, that we know it is a land which God hath promised as the inheritance of his children. It is indeed *a city that hath foundations*, in comparison of which all 8 10

the

SECT. XVI.

the most magnificent and established buildings of the children of men are but mean and moveable *tents.*

Ver. God boasts in the title of its *builder and maker,* having formed and fashioned it for the highest displays of his glory and his love; and in reference to it, *he is not ashamed to be called our God;* for by bestowing it upon us, he answers *all* which that high and
16 glorious *title* might import. May we ever desire this as our *better country,* and live as its citizens ought; *confessing ourselves,* in reference to it, to be *pilgrims and strangers upon the earth.* And though we here receive not the accomplishment of the promises, may we keep our eyes on the *objects* they exhibit, how distant soever they may seem; and being *persuaded of them,* may we *embrace them;* embrace them even with our dying arms, and breathe out our prepared and willing spirits, in full assurance that we are going to receive and possess them.

SECT. XVII.

The Apostle further dilates upon examples and instances of faith in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. Heb. XI. 17—29.

HEBREWS XI. 17.

SECT. XVII.

I HAVE already mentioned some glorious instances of the faith of Abraham, our illustrious progenitor; but I should be far from doing justice to my subject, if I were not to add another, the most celebrated of all. You will remember therefore, that it was *by faith* that *Abraham* was supported, *when he was tried,* in that most severe instance, and at the Divine command *offered* his son, his only son, *Isaac,* whom he loved; *yea, he who had received the promises,* which terminated not only in his seed, but in Isaac by name, *offered his only-begotten* [*son,*] in whom they so centred, that they must necessarily have failed if he had perished without any offspring. So that nothing seemed more difficult, on principles of common reason, than the reconciliation of the promise with the com-
18 mand. Even when he was destined to the altar, *concerning whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called,* (Gen. xxi. 12,) yet his triumphant faith surmounted even such an obstacle, and it was as wise and rational as it was
19 pious and heroic: *Reasoning* within himself as he did, *that God was able even to raise* [*him*] *from*

Heb. XI. 17.

HEBREWS XI. 17.

BY faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten *son;*

18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

19 Accounting that God was able to raise *him*

him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

from the dead[a]; and consequently that he could have brought Isaac to life again, if he had really expired under the sacrifical knife, and been reduced to ashes: *from whence he received him even in a figure*[b]. For as his production was a miracle, raising him, as it were, from the dead bodies of those who in a course of nature had no hope of children; so he was in another sense raised from the dead, when God gave him back to Abraham in the mount, in that awful transaction, in which was so significant a representation of Christ's day, (John viii. 56,) and of the method which God took for our redemption, in the sacrifice of his only-begotten Son.

SECT. xvii.

Heb. XI. 19.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith, in a revelation which he then received from God, under that superior direction, *Isaac* when advanced in age *blessed* his two children, *Jacob* and *Esau*[c], and uttered some remarkable oracles *concerning things* long *to come*, and of such a nature, that no human foresight could possibly reach them.

20

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped *leaning* upon the top of his staff.

By faith, Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, in full dependence on the Divine promise of an inheritance in Canaan; appointing these his grand-children, tribes in Israel: foretelling the superiority of Ephraim the younger, to Manasseth the elder; *and* in thankful acknowledgment of that Divine goodness, which he had so long experienced, at the same time *worshipped*[d], bowing down *upon the top of his staff*, with which he supported himself as he sat on the side of his bed[e].

21

Again,

a *Reasoning that God was able even to raise him.*] Archbishop Tillotson justly observes, that his *faith* was in this respect the more *admirable*, as, so far as we can learn, there never had been *one single* instance of a resurrection from the dead, *in*, or *before*, the days of Abraham.

b *In a figure: εν παραβολη.*] Some think this implies, that his *birth* was a kind of resurrection from the dead. But the learned Dr. Warburton contends earnestly for it, that εν παραβολη intimates, that the whole transaction was *parabolical* or *typical* of the method God would take for the salvation of men. The learned *Wolfius* is of the same opinion, (*Curæ Philolog.* Vol. IV. p. 762.) and observes in support of it, that the Greek word παραβολη answers to the Hebrew משל, and is so used by the *Seventy*; and that the Hebrews are wont to say במשל, *in* or *by* a *parable* or *figure*, when they would express a *typical representation*. He imagines this interpretation to be the more probable, because the *Apostle* hath put a mark of emphasis upon εν παραβολη, by prefixing και to it, *even in a figure*.

c *Blessed Jacob.*] He was persuaded that God would one way or another make good his promises to them, though he could not certainly tell *how*, and was mistaken in the person.

d *Worshipped.*] He thought it so great a privilege to be buried in the land of Canaan, that he *bowed his head*, in token of thankfulness for it; which was another demonstration of *faith* in God's promise. Gen. xlvii. 30, 31.

e *On the top of his staff*, as he sat on the side of his bed.] In the passage referred to Gen. xlvii. 31. it is said according to our English version, Israel *bowed himself*

upon

SECT. XVII.

Heb. XI. 22.

Again, it was *by faith* that *Joseph*, when *dying, mentioned the departure of the children of Israel* out of Egypt, as a fact which should certainly come to pass, though at a long distance of time; *and* then in token of his entire dependence upon it, and expectation of the inheritance they would then possess, he *gave a charge concerning* the carrying *his bones* with them, to be interred in the sepulchre of his fathers in Canaan.

22 By faith Joseph when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

23 The case of our illustrious law-giver will also furnish us with farther glorious examples of that, which was in him a kind of hereditary virtue; for it was *by faith* that *Moses, when* he was just *born, was hidden three months by his* pious *parents*, in their own house; *because they saw* [*he was*] *a graceful child*, who seemed by his aspect to promise something uncommon. *And they* therefore determined, if possible, to preserve his life, and *feared not the commandment of the king*, requiring all Israelitish parents, on pain of death, to give up their male-children, that they might be thrown into the river.

23 By faith Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw *he was* a proper child; and they were not afraid of the King's commandment.

24 *By faith* this *Moses, when he was grown up*[f] to maturity of age, and become great in the dignities and preferments of the Egyptian court, on full consideration of all that could be pleaded in favour of secular views, deliberately *refused to*

24 By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called

upon his bed's head. The *Apostle* says, *he worshipped upon the top of his staff:* and this agrees with the Greek and Syriac translation; and Wolfius adds, that the *Seventy* always render the Hebrew word מטה, *a staff.* Mr. Hallet, therefore, in a learned *note* upon this place, is of opinion that the Hebrew word signifies either a *bed* or a *staff*, and that our English translators too implicitly followed the *modern Jews*, and supposed it here to signify a *bed*, in opposition to the authority of the *Seventy* and of the *apostle*. The passages may possibly be reconciled, if there be any occasion for it, by the circumstance mentioned in the *paraphrase*, as it is not likely that Jacob was now *in bed*, (see Gen. xlvii. 29,) but he might very probably be sitting on the side of it. His leaning on the *top of his staff* shews that he was very *old* and *feeble;* and this circumstance, saith Mr. Hallet, is very pertinently mentioned by the *apostle*, to intimate that feeble as he was, he would worship God in the best manner he was able.

f *Grown up.*] Some would more literally render it, *grown great;* that is, a *great man* in power and dignity. But the version I have preferred is justified by Erasmus Schmidius, and by the learned Bos, who, in support of it, cites a remarkable passage from *Homer*, (*Exercit. Philolog.* p. 252,) and it appears by the account of Stephen, Acts xii. 23, that Moses was now forty years old. I have given a hint of both interpretations in the *paraphrase*. Some are of opinion, that this passage refers to the story which Josephus tells us, of his trampling on the crown when a boy; and that it is as if the *apostle* had said, "He did not do it as a *puerile* action, and when he understood not the value of things; but when he knew all the worth it could be supposed to have." See *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. II. p. 20.—If Josephus' account be right, Pharaoh's daughter had no son of her own, and adopted him, with some view to make him successor to the crown; but I do not apprehend the laws of Egypt would have permitted that, as he was of *foreign* birth.

g *Reproach*

called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

to be any longer *called*, as he had before been, *the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, but boldly professed himself an Israelite, and interposed to vindicate his brethren from their oppression: *Chusing* much *rather to partake with the people of God in their affliction, than to enjoy the temporary* and transient *pleasures of sin*, which he might have expected, had he continued in that magnificent, but corrupt court: *Esteeming the reproach of Christ*[g], the infamy that he might meet with in acknowledging himself one of the Israelites whom Christ had been pleased to take under his special protection, and whom God had acknowledged for his anointed people, *greater riches than* all *the treasures in Egypt*, though so opulent a kingdom: *for he directed his regards to the recompense of reward*[h], which he expected to receive in the invisible and eternal world, and to possess, when princes should have quitted their thrones, and all the pride of monarchs be laid low. It was also *by faith*, that *he left Egypt* in that resolute and heroic manner; *not fearing the wrath of the king*[i], when he charged him on pain of death to see his face no more; but before he went, boldly predicted the destruction of the first-born, which was to follow all the dreadful judgments already executed: *for he was* inwardly *strengthened* to this dignity and steadiness of conduct, *as seeing him who is* the great *invisible* Being, ever present to the eye of the believing mind, and whose presence and friendship is of such infinite importance, that he who fixes his regards on him, will never

SECT. XVII.

Heb. XI. 24.

25 Chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

g *Reproach of Christ.*] There are some who understand this of the reproach of Israel, God's *anointed* people, and so would render it, *the reproach of the anointed*; but I rather apprehend, considering the sense in which this name is every where else used by the apostle, that it refers to the relation in which Christ stood to Israel, as his peculiar people; so that reproach borne on *their account* was borne *for him.* (Compare 1 Cor. x. 9;) and Mr. *Fleming*, (*Christology*, Vol. I. p. 169,) urges this as an argument for Christ's existence before the time of Moses. *Du Mont* supposes that the Israelites expected deliverance by the Messiah, and that the Egyptians insulted them on that account; and it is certain, reproach borne *on the account of Christ*, may be, and is called the *reproach of Christ.* Compare Heb. xiii. 13; *Du Mont's Serm.* p. 151—155. And for the illustration of this he quotes, and by this key explains, Psal. lxxxix. 50—52.

h *Recompense of reward.*] That *reward* could not be *temporal grandeur*, which he might have had with much greater security and advantage in Egypt; nor the possession of Canaan, which he never saw. It must therefore be the *eternal inheritance* which was discovered to him by the principle here so largely described and recommended.

i *Fearing the wrath of the king.*] As it is so expressly said, (Exod. ii. 14, 15,) that when he first quitted Egypt, and went to sojourn in Midian, *he was afraid*; I apprehend the assertion of the *apostle*, that *he did not fear the wrath of the king*, refers to the instance mentioned in the *paraphrase.*

k *By*

SECT. XVII.

never by any consideration, be influenced to offend him, nor much impressed with the fear of any thing that would tempt him to do this.

Heb. XI. 28. *By faith* that God would assuredly send his angel on the vindictive design foretold, and spare the houses properly distinguished, *he celebrated the passover, and the pouring forth the blood* of the lamb, which he sprinkled on the lintels, and the posts of the doors, as the mark of committing those who dwelt under such roofs to the Divine protection; *that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them*, under the security of that peaceful sign: an emblem of the safety we expect by means of the blood of Jesus, the true and great passover, who is sacrificed for us.

28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.

29 Again, *by faith*, operating in Moses, and in its degree in them likewise, *they passed over the Red sea*[k], sedately, *as* if they had marched *on dry land*, while its waters by the Divine command divided, and left the channel bare to them, so that they completed their march through it, and arrived safely on the opposite shore; *which the Egyptians making an* insolent and rash *attempt to do, were* all *drowned*, and sunk like lead in the mighty waters, which returned upon them with irresistible violence.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea, as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET these glorious instances of *faith* be preserved in our *memory*, and have their due influence upon our *hearts*. When God Ver. calls us to resign our dearest comforts, let us think of that *heroic* 17 act of *faith* by which *Abraham offered up Isaac*, and seemed in him to sacrifice *all the promises*, as well as his son. Yet he therein 19 acted a part the most strictly *rational*; as rightly concluding, that God could with infinite ease call him *back to life* again, and make a person, who had poured forth all his blood on the altar, 20 and been reduced to ashes there, *the father of many nations*. Let 21 dying parents commit their children to the care of the ever-living God, like *Jacob*; and *worship him who hath fed them all their*

k *By faith they passed.*] Mr. *Saurin* observes, with his usual delicacy, that since it very evidently appears, that of those who passed through the sea, there were *some* with whom *God was not well pleased*, 1 Cor. x. 5, we cannot infer, that *all* the persons afterwards mentioned by name, as instances of *faith*, were, on the whole, in such a state of acceptance with him as to be entitled to his *everlasting favour*. *Saurin's Serm.* Vol. IX. p. 47.

their lives long, and who will never forsake those that put their trust in him. Let those who are called to glorify God, by opposing the unjust commands of great and powerful men, remember the *parents of Moses*, and remember their illustrious *child*. Does he now repent that wonderful *choice* that he made at an *adult* age? does he now wish that he had been called *the Son of Pharaoh's daughter*, rather than the *servant of God, faithful in all his house?* does he wish that he had secured the *treasures of Egypt*, and the *temporary pleasures of sin*, and declined that *reproach of Christ*, which has ended in eternal glory? Our hearts, our consciences will soon answer; let us then, like him, *have respect unto the recompence of reward*. Let us endeavour more frequently to direct our regards to God, and live *as seeing him who is invisible*.

SECT. XVII. Ver. 23 24 25 26 27

And while our faith is thus viewing him, let us look with pleasure to *the blood of sprinkling*, which places us under his protection; which introduces us to his favour; which secures us from the *destroying angel*. He will lead us on safely to his *heavenly Canaan*, if we fall not by *unbelief*. He will open our passage *through seas* of difficulty; he will send down upon us every suitable supply, and would much sooner command the *skies* to rain down *bread*, or the *flinty rock* to melt into *streams of water*, than desert his people in the *wilderness*. Let all his wonders of power and of love to *Israel* of old, animate our faith; and let them all quicken our obedience; and under a sense of our own weakness and the importance of this leading, this princely grace, let us daily pray, *Lord, increase our faith*.

28 29

SECT. XVIII.

The Apostle concludes his discourse on faith, by hinting at many other glorious instances of it, and besides several recorded in scripture, refers also to the case of those who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Heb. XI. 30.—XII. 2.

HEBREWS XI. 30.

BY faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed

HEBREWS XI. 30.

SECT. XVIII.

I HAVE mentioned the faith which our forefathers exercised on the miraculous power of God to lead them out of Egypt, and through the Red-sea; and I must farther observe, that they continued under the influence of the same principle when they came into the promised land: for it was *by faith* in those who marched round *the* strongly fortified *walls of Jericho*, following the ark, and who at the appointed signal blew the trumpets of rams-horns and shouted, that,

Heb. XI. 30.

SECT. lxviii.

contrary to all sensible appearance of possibility, they *fell down*, smitten by the hand of God, without any human force, *having been* only *surrounded seven days* in solemn silence, according to the Divine command; how absurd a spectacle soever their procession might appear to the besieged. It was *by faith*, and in consequence of it, that *Rahab the harlot did not perish with the infidels* of that city among whom she dwelt; *having received the spies* hospitably and dismissed them *in peace*, when an alarm was taken by her fellow-citizens, and they searched for them to destroy them. She therefore hazarded her own life to preserve theirs, believing them to be the servants of the Almighty Jehovah, and assuring herself that he could protect her in her efforts for their security, and could make them the means of delivering her and her family; which was accordingly the case.

passed about seven days.

Heb. XI. 30. 31

31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

32 *And what shall I say farther* upon this copious, this inexhaustible subject? *for the time would fail me* if I should attempt *to discourse* at large *concerning Gideon*, who with so small a band of men cut off so many thousands of the Midianites; *and Barak*, who freed Israel from the oppression of Jabin, and routed Sisera his general; *and Samson*, who slew so many thousands of the Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; *and* performed so many other astonishing atchievements: I might also speak of the victory of *Jephtha* over the Ammonites, *and* the heroic acts of *David*, in his combat with Goliah, and his other frequent encounters with the enemies of God, and his Israel; *and* even of *Samuel*, who though his character seemed more pacific, as a prophet and a judge, yet led on the armies of the Lord on a remarkable occasion, to an illustrious victory. I might also enlarge on the celebrated histories of Elijah, Elisha, *and* others of *the prophets*, particularly Daniel, and the three young worthies, whose magnanimous history he hath particularly recorded. I will not dwell on the history of those heroes *who* have transmitted their names to our age, and shall transmit them to all who are to come, with such distinguished honour; but shall content myself with observing, that it was by the exercise of this great principle, that they were raised to those sublime degrees of reputation and glory. It was *by faith* that some of them, after many

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and *of* Barak, and *of* Samson, and *of* Jephtha: *of* David also and Samuel, and *of* the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms

doms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

many a painful struggle, *subdued* the *kingdoms* of those princes which had oppressed God's Israel; others of them *wrought righteousness*[a], and carried their obedience to God, and their zeal for his law to the most extraordinary degrees; others of them *obtained promises* of the most unexpected events in their favour, which were exactly and circumstantially performed; others *stopped the mouths of lions*, which came roaring against them, as if they would have devoured them in a moment, or into whose dens they were thrown.

SECT. xviii.

Heb. XI. 33.

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

Nay as to some of them we are expressly said, 34 that they *quenched the violence of* the *fire*, when they were actually thrown into the furnace; others of them *escaped the edge of the sword*[b], when it was just lifted up to destroy them; *they were strengthened in* the midst of *weakness*[c], and many of them *became* so *valiant in battle*, that they *repelled the armies of the aliens*, or foreign enemies, when they encamped against them.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might

There are also recorded in the prophetic writings 35 other instances, in which *women received their dead* [*children*] *by a resurrection* from the dead; which till these examples, had never been known or heard of. (Compare 1 Kings xvii. 22, 23; 2 Kings iv. 36, 37.) *And* the credible records of succeeding ages inform us of the triumphs of faith in a still more glorious degree: in which several *others*, and particularly seven children, and one pious and holy mother, *were tortured*[d] in the most inhuman manner, to compel them to renounce their religion, and commit idolatry; but endured all with invincible fortitude, *not accepting deliverance*[e] when it was offered them

a *Wrought righteousness.*] Some have interpreted this, not only of their leading lives exemplary for holiness, but *administering justice* to others. But I do not know that the phrase has ever that signification.

b *Edge of the sword.*] Probably this may refer to the deliverance of David from the sword of Saul, and of Elijah, and Micaiah, from that of Ahab.

c *Strengthened in weakness.*] Some refer this to their being recovered from *sickness*, by faith and prayer, as Hezekiah, Job, and David were.

d *Were tortured.*] The original word signifies a peculiar sort of torture, which was called that of the *tympanum*, or *drum* when they were extended in the most violent manner, and then beaten with clubs, which must give exquisite pain, when all the parts were on such a stretch. See *Wolfius Curæ Philolog. in loc.*

e *Not accepting deliverance.*] Probably the apostle here refers to 2 Mac. viii. 11, 14, 23, 29, where there is an evident reference to a *resurrection*, which plainly shews it then to have been assuredly believed among the Jews. Dr. Scott thinks it was revealed to them by Daniel and Ezekiel, in order to prepare them for those severe trials which they were afterwards to undergo for the sake of their religion. *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. V. p. 208. But it may be justly debated, how far the passages

SECT. XVIII.

them, nor even riches and preferments added to the proposal, *that they might obtain a better resurrection*[f] than their persecutors could offer them, when they seemed more than half dead; even a resurrection to the enjoyment of an everlasting kingdom in the heavens. *And others*, in the same glorious cause, *received the trial of* cruel *mockings and scourgings*[g]; but neither the derision, nor the pain, could prevail upon them to desert their profession. *Yea*, they proved *also* the utmost force *of bonds and imprisonment*, in which many of them languished for tedious months and years, under all the ill-usage which commonly attends such confinements. And others were brought out from their bonds to the most infamous and painful executions; and *they were* some of them *stoned*, and others *sawn asunder*[h], they were *tempted*[i] by unheard-of cruelties on the one hand, as well as the offers of immediate deliverance on the other, and at length *slain with the sword; they wandered about* clothed in the meanest manner, and sometimes, when their former habits were worn out, only

Heb. XI. 35.

might obtain a better resurrection.

36 And others had trial of *cruel* mockings, and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins,

sages referred to could afford *certain* proof of a resurrection. It is observable, that Josephus, being probably ashamed to avow a hope which the heathens had so much derided, suppressed this circumstance, and only hints at some expectations of a *future state*.

f *Better resurrection.*] Dr. Owen understands this, as if the *apostle* had meant, *The better resurrection*, that is, the resurrection which is better than the *resurrection of the wicked*. But it is observed by Jacobus Capellus, that most probably, in that case, the article would have been prefixed της κρειττονος αναστασεως. The opinion of Crellius and Dr. Hammond, is, that the word *better*, is to be understood as opposed to a *present remission of their torments*; and this sense I have adopted in the *paraphrase*; supposing it bears a respect to the deliverance which they would not accept, mentioned in the words immediately preceding. Mr. Hallet is exceeding clear, that the opposition lies between the resurrection to *eternal life*, which these martyrs expected, and the resurrection of the dead children to *life in this world*, mentioned in the first clause of the verse.

g *Scourgings.*] Jeremiah was buffeted, Jer. xx. 2; and some think, scourged too, chap. xxxvii. 15. But *scourging* was so frequent a punishment, both alone, and before a capital execution, (compare Dr. *Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel-history*, Vol. I. Book I. chap. viii. § 13, and Dr. Scott on Matthew xxvii. 26,) that it is probable it was inflicted on many other pious persons on account of their religion.

h *Sawn asunder.*] Dr. *Prideaux*, (*Connect.* Vol. I. p. 29,) and many others, suppose the *apostle* might here refer to the tradition among the Jews, that the prophet Isaiah was *sawn asunder* at the command of Manasseh. Calmet understands by this expression, *being torn in pieces*, as it were, under a *threshing instrument*, consisting of wooden rollers, full of sharp iron teeth like a *harrow*. Compare Isa. xli. 15; xxviii. 27; 2 Sam. xii. 31. *Calmet's Diss.* Vol. II. No. 5, p. 134, 135.

i *Tempted.*] Some suppose a mistake in the reading, and that it should be επυρωθησαν, they were *seared* with a red hot iron, or *burnt* alive, which undoubtedly would give a still stronger sense. The learned *Albert*, (*Observ. Philolog.* p. 436, supposes, that instead of επειρασθησαν, the *apostle* wrote εσπειρασθησαν, which expressed their being *squeezed* to death by *ropes* or *cords* twisted, and drawn tight about the body; or at least *their being strangled*.

k *Sheep-*

skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

only *in sheep-skins*[k] *and in goat-skins, being destitute* of the common accommodations of life, *afflicted* and even *tormented*, sometimes by the fury of their enemies, and at other times by the rigour of the seasons. And though these were persons of the most amiable and venerable characters, *of whom the world was not worthy* that they should inhabit it; *they wandered in desarts, and in mountains, and in dens, and holes of the earth*, that they might hide themselves, if possible, from the rage of their persecutors, who often, like dogs hunting for their prey, followed them even into these last retreats, solitary and inhospitable as they were.

SECT. XVIII.

Heb. XI. 37.

38 Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in desarts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

38

39 And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

And all these heroes in different ages, were supported under their respective trials, severe and extreme as they were, *by* the exercise of a firm and lively *faith*, in the fidelity of God, and the invisible rewards and glories of a future state; and it was by this, that *having obtained a good report*, they persevered to the end. But they *did not receive the* full accomplishment of the *promise* made to their fathers, nor have they yet arrived to the full and complete enjoyment of that glory which faith taught them to expect:

39

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

God having according to the counsels of his infinite wisdom, *provided something* still *better for us*, in the gospel-revelation; that so the beauty of his conduct and administration might be so much the more apparent; and *that they, without us, might not be made perfect*[l]; but all might end with the greatest dignity and propriety, in bringing all his children together, to the full consummation of their hopes in Christ Jesus his Son, at the time of his final and triumphant appearance.

40

In

k *Sheep-skins: μηλωταις.*] The *Seventy*, in the case of Elijah, translate the word which we render *mantle*, by μηλωτη, a *sheep-skin*. That *sheep-skins* and *goat-skins*, or at least the skins of some animals, were frequently worn by the ancient prophets, seems to be intimated, Zech. xiii. 4.

l *That they, without us, might not be made perfect.*] It is debated, whether this refers to the most perfect state of the church *on earth*, and so expresses a *decorum* in the conduct of providence, in *gradually* improving the church of God; or to the glory of the *future state*. I have given in the *paraphrase* what seemed to me the most noble and important sense.—The learned *Wolfius*, (*Curæ Philolog.* Vol. IV. p. 774,) mentions with approbation the exposition of Alexander More, to this effect, that the promise which these worthies did not receive, related to the *first* personal *appearance* of the Messiah: that the *better thing* which God hath provided for us, is the promise of *Christ's second appearance*, that they might *then* be made perfect, but not without *us*, though *we* have received the accomplishment of the first promise without *them*.

m *Being*

SECT. xviii.

Heb. XII. 1.

In the mean time, we may consider this glorious and triumphant assembly, as looking down from the peaceful and blessed state at which many of them are already arrived, and observing the manner in which we endeavour to follow them. And let the thought animate us in a becoming manner. *Being therefore*, as we are, *encompassed*[m] *with so great a cloud of witnesses*[n], who surround us on every side in a vast innumerable assembly, the spectators of our trial, *let us lay aside every* incumbering *weight, and* especially *the sin which in present circumstances has the greatest advantage* [*against us*[o],] I mean, a disposition to relinquish, or dissemble the gospel, for fear of sufferings; [*and*] let us *run with patience* and perseverance, *the race which is set before us*, resolutely persisting in it, how long and painful soever it may be. Looking off from every object which would interrupt us in our career, and *fixing our eyes upon Jesus, the leader and finisher of* [*our*] *faith*[p], who called us out to this strenuous, yet glorious, enterprise; who animates us by his example, and supports us by his grace, till the season comes, in which he shall bestow upon us the promised crown. He

XII. 1. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured

m *Being therefore encompassed, &c. let us.*] Our translators have rendered this, *Wherefore seeing we also;* connecting και with ημεις, whereas it should be joined with τοιγαρουν, and considered as a kind of *expletive*.

n *Cloud of witnesses.*] Capellus thinks this expression is an allusion to vast numbers of birds flying together like a *cloud*, Isa. lx. 8. The word *witnesses* certainly alludes to the *Olympic race*, where persons were appointed to stand at the *mark*, to observe who first came thither, and give evidence in favour of the *conquerer;* upon whom therefore a *crown* was bestowed according to their testimony. The allusion in *laying aside every incumbrance*, is too evident to need further illustration. See the next *note*.

o *In present circumstances has the greatest advantage:* αμαρτιαν ευπεριστατον.] This (as some imagine) may signify *a sin which sits easily about us;* which is explained of *the vanity of the world*, that seems to be matter of comparatively little danger, yet may be a fatal entanglement to us; as light garments may to those who run a *race*, when they are blown about by the wind. Others would render it, *The well-circumstanced sin*, in opposition to what is ευπεριστατον, without any recommending circumstance, or *bare of ornament*. Thus it is illustrated by *Dunlop*, Vol. I. *Serm.* xiii. p. 309—316.

p *The Author and Finisher of our faith.*] It must be confessed the word [*our*] is not in the original; but the *faith* of which *Christ* is the *Author and Finisher* must be the faith of *Christians;* and when he is said to be the *Author and Finisher of our faith*, it must signify, not only that he was an illustrious *example* of it, but that, as our *Leader*, he brings us to it, and carries us on in the exercise of it, till we attain the complete felicity to which it was intended to introduce us. The word *looking*, αφορωντες, properly signifies our *taking off* our regard from *other* things, that we may fix them upon Christ.—Mr. Dunlop thinks Christ is called the *Author and Finisher of faith*, in allusion to the *judges of the games*, who set laws before the contenders whereby they were to govern themselves, and then adjudged the crowns to the *conquerors*. Thus, says that *excellent writer*, he eases us of our burthens, animates our faintness, retards the progress of our enemies, and at length will with his own hands set upon our heads that beautiful diadem which he hath purchased with his own blood.

q *For*

endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.

He indeed is the most illustrious example of all, *who for the joy* and glory *that was set before him*[q], in the view of honouring his heavenly Father, and procuring the salvation of men, and so passing to such exalted honour and felicity, *endured* all the agonies of *the cross despising the shame* of so ignominious an execution. *And* accordingly, now the infamy, the pain, and the humiliation are ceased for ever, he is ascended to that world, where alone such consummate goodness could receive its proper reward. And there he *is set down* in conspicuous and peerless majesty, *at the right hand of the* glorious and exalted *throne of God*, there to live and reign in immortal felicity and dignity. And among all the illustrious examples of faith, by whom you may be animated and edified, there is none comparable to him. SECT. xviii. Heb. XII. 2.

IMPROVEMENT.

Is it possible we should read these animated periods without feeling our hearts glow with a sacred ambition of acting as becomes those who have heard such tidings and beheld such examples? If the triumphs of faith in *Rahab*, and *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and *Sampson*, and *Jephtha*, cannot move us, nor even those of *David*, and of *Samuel*; if we are insensible of the martial prowess which they exerted in firm dependance on *the Lord God of hosts*; let us behold other combats, in which they who seemed *weaker*: became yet more gloriously victorious. Let us remember, not only the *mouths of lions stopped*, but the *violence of fire quenched*, when the faithful servants of God were thrown into it. Yea, let us behold those who endured its unquenched violence, and turned all those painful and terrible sensations, into an heroic occasion of expressing the superior ardour of their *love* to God, and the stedfastness of *their faith* in him. Let us remember those *youths*, and *children*, and *women*, among the rest of these worthies, indeed among the worthiest of them, who were *tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.* Ver. 31, 32 33 34 35

In

q *For the joy that was set before him.*] Some would render it, *Instead of the joy that lay before him*, meaning the honour and happiness he might have enjoyed in the present world. But προκειμενης has so evident a reference to verse 1. that I cannot by any means acquiesce in that interpretation. Besides, the word αντι may well signify, *set against that joy*, and then the meaning will be, that he despised the shame of the cross, in comparison of the joy set before him. Nor can we imagine any love more disinterested than that, which should make his recovering sinners to God and happiness, the great joy of his heart, and in subserviency to the divine glory, the grand motive of his actions and sufferings.

SECT. XVIII.

In vain were all the terrors of persecuting rage and cruelty opposed to these triumphs. They submitted to *imprisonment*, and *banishment*, how dear soever liberty and their native country might be; they quitted their commodious habitations for *rocks*, and *caves*, and their comfortable apparel for *sheep skins* and *goat-skins*. And when *desarts and dens* could no longer shelter their wretchedness, but they were seized by their blood-thirsty enemies, they beheld, and endured, undismayed, the most horrid instruments of death. When the piercing *sword* entered their vitals, when overwhelming *stones* dashed them in pieces, when the torturing *saw* was tearing out their very entrails, there was a principle within superior to all these, which nothing could *pierce*, which nothing could *rend away*, which nothing could *overwhelm*. God hath done an honour to our nature in raising up such illustrious persons, *of whom the world was not worthy*, and whose distinguished worth could never have been manifested in the eyes of their fellow-creatures, had it not been called out to such rigorous trials. Well might they rejoice on any terms in their dismission from a state of existence, so far beneath the elevation of their views. And though their *names* may be perished from among men, and the distinct *history* of each, lost in the crowds of countless multitudes, yet are they all in *remembrance before God*; and the *death of each of his saints*, in such circumstances, peculiarly *precious in his sight*. They are now bathing in those rivers of delight, which flow through the celestial paradise, and waiting the full consummation of their hope in that *better resurrection*, in the views of which they suffered so bravely. In the mean time, *they look down*, as it were, from the battlements of heaven upon *our* combats, upon *our* race. O, let them not see us basely shrinking back, or loitering! *Let us lay aside every weight*; let us, especially, guard against *the sin which most easily besets us*. And to establish all our fortitude, and to awaken all our ardour, let us look to an object brighter and nobler than all these, even to the *Son of God*, *the Sun of righteousness*, shining in high pre-eminence above all this *cloud*, and as it were gilding it by the reflection of his effulgent rays. Let *us look to Jesus*, who *leads* us on; to *Jesus*, who will complete the triumph of our *faith*, *and* set the *crown* on the head of every one who *overcometh!* Let us daily think, what *agony*, what *ignominy*, he endured for us; and let every consideration of noble ambition, of duty, and of gratitude, fire our souls, and add wings to our zeal: so shall we at length share *in his joy*, *and sit down* victorious *with him on his throne*, *as he hath also overcome*, *and is set down with the Father on his throne*.

Ver. 36 37 38 37 38 40 Chap. XII. 1 2

SECT,

SECT. XIX.

The Apostle animates the believing Hebrews to bear and improve the afflictions to which they were exposed, and to exert themselves vigorously to promote the united interests of peace and holiness. Heb. XII. 3—14.

HEBREWS XII. 3.

FOR consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.

HEBREWS XII. 3.

IN order to encourage you, my dear brethren, in your Christian course, I have directed you, and I must again direct you, to the Lord Jesus Christ; *for* what can be more important than to *consider him* [a], *who* with patient fortitude, *endured such* obstinate and perverse *contradiction of* ungrateful *sinners against himself.* Think how great and illustrious a Person he was, and what severe things he suffered, *that you may not grow weary* in your Christian course, *nor faint in your minds*, when called to share in some degree of his trials. And indeed you will be inexcusable if you should desert his cause, on account of any such trials as you have yet endured; for *you have not as yet* undergone the severest proofs of your integrity, nor *resisted unto blood, striving against sin,* [b] as he did, who made his life a sacrifice to duty. *And ye* seem to *have forgotten the exhortation* [c], of the word of God, *which speaketh to you, as to* his *sons,* (Prov. iii. 11, 12,) saying, *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord,* as if it were a small matter; *nor faint* and sink, *when thou art rebuked by him;* but avoid the extremes of proud insensibility, and entire dejection. *For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, and scourgeth,* with seeming severity, *every son whom he receiveth,*

SECT. XIX. Heb. XII. 3.

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

4

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

5

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,

6

a *Consider him: αναλογισασθε.* The *original word* is very emphatical; and as Erasmus Schmidius observes, is a *metaphor* taken from *arithmetical and geometrical proportions.* So that it signifies the great *accuracy* and *exactness* with which they should consider the Author and Finisher of their faith, and especially the *analogy* between his case and their own.

b *Resisted unto blood.*] It has been justly observed by several *commentators* that there are many agonistical terms in this context. In the phrase before us there seems to be an allusion to the *pugiles* or boxers, who fought erect, with their hands stretched out, and were often besmeared with blood. Mr. *Saurin* just observes, in his beautiful illustration of this *text, (Serm.* ix. p. 90,) that sometimes men were killed by the blows of the *cestus.* See also Dr. *Whitby in loc.*

c *Ye have forgotten the exhortation.*] Beza, and some others, choose to read this clause with an interrogation, *Have ye forgotten the exhortation?*

d *Whom*

SECT. XIX.

Heb. XII. 7.

ceiveth[d], to peculiar favour. It is evident therefore, that *if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as* wise and affectionate parents deal *with* their beloved *sons; for what son is there whom the father chasteneth not*, more or less? There are scarce any children, who do not sometimes need correction, and no wise and good parent, who will always forbear it. *But if ye are without chastisement, of which all* the genuine children *are partakers, then are ye* treated as men often treat *bastards*[e] about whose education they are often careless as being ashamed of them, and looking upon them as a scandal to their families; *and not* as they treat their legitimate *sons*, whom they intend to make their heirs, and concerning whom they are solicitous, that they may be happy themselves, and a credit and comfort to the family they stand related to; which a child left to himself, without correction, is by no means like to prove.

teneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

9 *Now if*[f] *when we had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, we gave them reverence*,[g] and submitted patiently and quietly to their discipline, *shall we not much rather*, on the justest principles of filial duty, *be in subjection to the* great *Father of* our *spirits*, by whom that noble part of our nature was produced, in the production of which our earthly parents had no share? *And* indeed we know this to be necessary, if we desire

9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

d *Whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*] There seems to be a beautiful gradation in these words. To *receive*, signifies here to *have a particular regard for*. Compare Isa. xliii. 1. in the *Seventy*. The passage is quoted from Prov. iii. 11, 12; and the last clause of the *apostle's* citation, which is, *And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*, is by our English version, and the old *Latin*, there rendered, *Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.* And this is agreeable to the *modern pointing*. But without any change in the Hebrew letters, the clause may be translated as it is by the *apostle*, agreeably to the rendering of the *Seventy*, and some other *ancient versions*. See *Mr. Hallet in loc.*

e *Bastards.*] In those dissolute ages there were among the heathen many base-born children. And it is highly probable, that as for such, their education, (like that of Jeptha, whose fatal error might perhaps be owing to it,) was much *neglected*, so as to come almost into a *proverb*.

f *Now if.*] Instead of εἰ δὲ, the *Syriac version* seems to have read εἰ δὲ, *but if*. This reading is followed by Curcellæus; Beza expresses some approbation of it.—The learned Albert, and Raphelius, consider the clause as a smart and animated interrogation, and produce various passages to show that this is the force of the Greek particle εἰ δὲ

g *When we had fathers of our flesh,—we gave them reverence.*] It had indeed been more literally rendered, *We had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence:* which some consider as a Hebraism, as if he had said, *Who corrected us that we might give them reverence.* But it seems more natural to understand the particle, καὶ, as connecting the two clauses. *We had fathers of our flesh, and we gave them reverence* In which view the version I have given fully expresses the *apostle's* design.

h *And*

desire to *live*[h], since rebellion against him will be infinitely fatal, and expose us to a dreadful and capital punishment. SECT. XIX.

Heb. XII. 10.

10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us*, after their own pleasure: but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

But not to insist on considerations of terror; let us attend to those of a more ingenuous nature, and particularly those which arise from the reason of things, and a view of what will on the whole be most conducive to our own truest advantage. As *for* our earthly parents, *they indeed for a few days*[i], while we were in a state of infancy and childhood, *corrected* [*us*] *as they thought good*, and there might sometimes be a mixture of weakness and arbitrary passion in their chastisements; *but* we are sure this can never be the case with respect to our heavenly Father. O, far from that: if *he* take the rod into his hand, it is *for our advantage*, and *that we may be partakers of his holiness;* which is indeed the greatest dignity, beauty, and glory of the rational nature, and what most immediately tends to the happiness of time and eternity.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.

Now it is true, that *all chastening for the present* 11 *seemeth not to be* [*matter*] *of joy, but of grief:* it is painful to the flesh, and human nature would rather desire to be excused from it: *but afterwards it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness*[k], *to those that are* in a suitable manner *exercised therewith*[l]. It produces and improves those virtues which afford peace and joy to the mind, and like a nobler crown than that which many endure so much to obtain, richly rewards the most strenuous labours, and most afflictive struggles.

12 Wherefore lift up the

Therefore rally your languid spirits, *lift up the* 12 *hands*

h *And live.*] This *awful*, yet *tender* insinuation of the terrible consequences of rebellion against the *Father of spirits*, (in which there is an *allusion* to the *capital punishment* to be inflicted on a disobedient child, Deut. xxi. 18, &c.) is very remarkable; and an instance of the *apostle's* forcible manner of suggesting the most *weighty* thought, sometimes in an *oblique* manner, and in very few words. Compare Rom. xii. ult. 1 Tim. iv. 16. Tit. ii. 15. Phil. i. 29. Heb. xii. 28. And many *passages* to be found in all his writings.

i *For a few days.*] This is to be applied both to our *earthly* parents, and our *heavenly* Father, and it contains a beautiful and comfortable *intimation*, that this *whole* life, when compared with our *future* being, is but as a *few days:* indeed infinitely less than the days of *childhood* to those of the *longest* life of man upon earth.

k *Peaceful fruit of righteousness.*] Possibly alluding to the *crowns* of *olive* given to the *victor* in the *Olympic games*, which was alo an emblem of *peace*. The learned Bos would translate the word ειρηνικον, *pleasant, joyful*, it being usual to express *pleasure* and *happiness* by *peace: Wolfius* is of opinion, that the expression refers to that *peace with God which we obtain by faith*. See *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. IV p. 783.

l *Exercised therewith.*] Not only corrected, but *instructed* and *edified;* setting themselves to search out the proper *lessons* which afflictive dispensations are intended to teach.

m *Lift*

SECT. XIX.

hands that hang down[m], that they may exert themselves in this glorious combat, *and* strengthen *the feeble* tottering *knees*, that they may hold out to the end of this important race. *And* by the proper exercise of discipline in your Christian societies, and by all the other offices of true and faithful friendship, *make strait paths for your feet.* Regulate matters so, that the way of duty may be as obvious and easy as possible, *that the infirm*, the lame, and the decrepit, *may not*, by discouragements and temptations, *be turned out of the way*, or thrown down, *but* that every such feeble traveller in the way to Sion, *may rather be healed;* recovered from falls or weakness, and strengthened to a course of more strenuous and persevering piety.

Heb. XII. 13.

the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.

14 And while the jarring interests of this world so often occasion scandalous contentions between men, and even between Christians, let it be your faithful and zealous care to *pursue peace with all men,* even when it may seem to flee from you. *And* at the same time remember, whatever the consequence may be, to cultivate universal *holiness*, in all its branches; *without which*, how ready soever men may be to flatter themselves with vain expectations, *no man shall see the Lord.* For it is his unalterable decree, for ever to exclude those souls in which sin reigns, from that sight of him in the celestial world, for which their tempers and dispositions render them altogether unfit, even to a degree of utter incapacity.

14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

In what clearer words can those exhortations of the *apostle* be expressed! by what more powerful motives can they be enforced! 14 Behold, the whole of our duty comprehended in one word: to *follow after peace and holiness!* Behold the most awful engagements suggested, that *no man*, whatever his profession, or hope, or

m *Lift up the hands that hang down.*] The connection of these words in Isaiah xxxv. 3, from whence they are borrowed, leads us to understand them of assistance given to *others*. But this must by necessary consequence suppose a care to *exert ourselves* with vigour and resolution. It is certain that these are likewise *agonistic* phrases, by the following expression, *make straight paths for your feet*, which some understand, ordering their lives so that *others* might be directed and encouraged by their example. Diodate gives it a singular sense, as if it had been said, By your voluntary and chearful obedience, make the *rules* of the gospel seem *easy*. I have in the *paraphrase* endeavoured to unite both the views to *ourselves* and *others*, as it is certain one could not be intended as exclusive of the other.

SECT. XIX.

or confidence may be, can *possibly see the Lord without it!* What a solicitude should it awaken to cultivate *holiness* in ourselves, to promote it in *others*, and to remove every *obstruction* as much as possible. "Awaken our spirits, O Lord, by thy good Spirit, that the most *languid hands*, and *feeble knees*, may be *strengthened* and confirmed." And that they may be strengthened, let us look to our great *Leader*, to him who passed through so many years, in the midst of the most violent opposition, the most perverse *contradiction*. Surely we might see enough to animate us to maintain the combat, even till we left the last drop of our blood in the place, when we *strive against sin*, against his enemies and ours, to deliver us from the power of which, he assumed flesh and blood, and died.

Ver. 12 3

He, the *best beloved Son*, was distinguished by his *Father's* chastisement, though there was not the least degree of failing in him to deserve it. But *the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* And shall we who have merited to be chastised with *scorpions*, mourn at the *rod?* Let this *scripture* be attentively reviewed, and laid up in our mind, to dispose us to the most exemplary *patience* under affliction; and to guard against the opposite and dangerous extremes, of *despising Divine corrections*, or *fainting under them.* Would we wish to be excused from the *tokens* of God's *paternal love?* Would we wish to be neglected, as if we were *bastards*, rather than cultivated with the discipline of beloved *children?* Were we submissive to our *earthly parents*, and shall we rebel against our *Father in heaven?* Shall *we not be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, and live?* May our souls remember the unanswerable argument and the awful motive to this subjection. In what would opposition end, but in *death?* and how unreasonable would that opposition be? Is *God* in these later ages of the world become an *arbitrary* and *tyrannical* being, that his proceedings should now be suspected and censured? Is he no longer concerned for the *profit* and advantage of his children? or is it no longer desirable to be *partakers of his holiness?* of that *holiness*, which is to fit us to *see* and enjoy him for ever. *Lord*, should each of us say, I bless thee, that thou hast made me partaker of thy providential *bounties*, of thy *gospel*, of thy *grace*, in any degree: but Oh, *my soul* longs to be *partaker of thine holiness*, to bear thine image more completely, as the great glory and blessedness of my nature. For this therefore would I submit to thy *corrections*, though *for the present* ever so *grievous*, and wait those *peacable fruits of righteousness* which will be so rich an equivalent for all.

5 8 9 10 11

SECT.

SECT. XX.

The Apostle solemnly cautions them against despising the blessings of the gospel, and sacrificing them to any secular views, or animal gratifications; and enforces the caution by representing the incomparable excellence of those blessings, and the wonderful manner in which they were introduced; which even the introduction of the Jewish economy, glorious as that was, did by no means equal. Heb. XII. 15—29.

SECT. XX.

Heb. XII. 15.

HEBREWS XII. 15.

I HAVE been earnestly exhorting you to cultivate holiness in your own hearts and lives; and I must farther press it upon you, that you endeavour to maintain a friendly and brotherly inspection over each other. *Look to it*, therefore, with the greatest attention and care, for yourselves and one another, *lest any one*, by apostacy from the Christian religion, *fall short of the grace of God*, under the day of grace and dispensation of the gospel; *lest any root of bitterness* [a] and poison, *springing up* unheeded, *occasion trouble* to the society in general, *and by it*, before you are aware, *many be* disturbed and *defiled*, through the contagion of so bad an exam-

16 ple: *Lest there* [*be*,] for instance, *any fornicator*, who should abuse the liberty of the gospel into an occasion of gratifying his fleshly lusts; *or* any other voluptuous and *profane person* [b], who should put an open contempt upon spiritual blessings, sacrificing them to the hope of some present indulgence; *as Esau, who for* so mean a thing as *one meal, gave away his birthright* [c], even all the peculiar and religious honours, as well as revenues of his primogeniture.

17 *For ye know, that when afterwards he would gladly have inherited the blessing*, which was its most

HEBREWS XII. 15.

LOOKING diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled;

16 Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right.

17 For ye know how that afterward when he

a *Root of bitterness* and poison.] The word ראש, which is used, Deut. xxix. 18, properly signifies an *infectious kind of plant*, which by its influence *taints* other vegetables which grow near it.

b *Profane person.*] Esau is called a *profane person*, because as a *prophetic blessing* went along with the *birth-right*, there was a *profane* contempt of it in the infamous bargain here referred to. And as an immoderate eagerness in the gratification of appetite, would naturally imply a contempt of spiritual and Divine blessings, to be sacrificed to such gratifications, it was properly expressed by *profaneness*.

c *For one meal gave away his birth-right.*] That seems the just rendering of αντι βρωσεως μιας απεδοτο τα πρωτοτοκια αυτου. Dr. Barrow, I think, would render it, *for one little eating bout*: but that seemed not sufficiently *grave*.

d *He*

he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

most valuable attendant, *he was rejected*[d]; *for* when he would have persuaded Isaac his father to have revoked and transferred that which he had just before pronounced upon his brother Jacob, *he found no room for repentance*[e], no possibility of changing his father's mind, by all his submissions and intreaties; *though he sought it earnestly*, and even *with tears*, yet still Isaac persisted in what he had done, and said, "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed.' Gen. xxvii. 33. SECT. XX. Heb. XII. 17.

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

The inestimable privileges and prerogatives, which the gospel brings along with it, so superior to the Mosaic law, add great weight to these exhortations and cautions; *for ye*, who are proselyted to Christianity, *are not come to* Sinai again, to *the* awful *mountain which was the object of touch*,[f] though the touch of it were prohibited on so high a penalty; *and to the burning fire* that surrounded it, *and the thick cloud, and darkness, and* dreadful *tempest*, which were the tremendous signals of God's descent upon it; 18

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard, intreated, that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

And to the sound of the trumpet, which at length waxed exceeding loud, Exod. xix. 18, 19, *and the voice of* distinct *words*, spoken with a sound which reached all the thousands of Israel, and with *which they who heard*, were so powerfully affected, that they *entreated the word might not be continued*, or carried any farther *to them*, but that the remainder of what the Lord had to say to them, might be delivered by the mediation of Moses; 19

For

d *He was rejected.*] From comparing the blessing of Jacob and Esau, Gen. xxvii. 28, 29, 39, 40, it will appear that there must be something *spiritual* in the blessing of Jacob; else Esau would not have been said to be *rejected*, considering what he obtained. See Dr. *Goodwin's Works*, Vol. I. p. 43.

e *No room for repentance.*] We render it *no place for repentance.* The meaning of this undoubtedly is not, that he would have *repented* and *could not*; but that there was no room for his repentance, it would not be regarded; or, in other words, that his father's mind could not be changed.

f *Mountain, which was the object of touch: ορει ψηλαφωμενω.*] Dr. Wall, in his *note* upon this place, declares himself inclined, if he had the authority of any *manuscript* or *version* to support him, to read ω ψηλαφωμενω, *which might not be touched*, referring to the prohibition in Exod. xix. 13, and which the apostle mentions in the very next verse. But there is no necessity at all for this alteration. For it is not intimated by the expression, that the mountain might *lawfully* be touched, but that, as I have translated it, it was the *object of touch*, which indeed is implied in the very prohibition itself. And in thus characterizing mount Sinai, it was his intention to intimate that it was an earthly mountain, not like mount Sion, *the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.*

g *Moses*

SECT. XX.

Heb. XII. 20.

For they were not able to endure that charge *which was pronounced;* so that there seemed little room for the caution given, *and* that with so much severity, that it was added, *If so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or struck through with a dart,* if it escape immediate death from the tempest and the lightning. (Exod. xix. 12, 13,) *And the appearance was*
21 *so dreadful* [*that*] *Moses* himself, who was happy in such unparelleled degrees of the divine favour, and accustomed to converse with God in so intimate a manner, when urged by the people to act as their mediator in this awful transaction, *said,* Though I consent to undertake the charge, *I do* nevertheless *exceedingly fear*
22 *and tremble*[g]. *But ye,* my dear brethren, *are* so happy as to be *come to* a dispensation, the reverse of all these terrors, even to the mild and gentle discoveries which God makes of his presence on *Mount Sion*[h]; *and to* the holy and joyous solemnities which grace *the city of the living God* situated there, even *the heavenly Jerusalem,* his sacred and everlasting abode; *and to myriads of* surrounding *angels,* whom it is
23 impossible to number. Ye are come *to the* great *general assembly*[i], *and church of the first-born*[k], the priests of God, *who are written in heaven,* whose names are registered among the inhabitants of the place, the denizens of that city, *and* ministers of God's temple there.

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.

21 And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceeding fear, and quake.)

22 But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

23 To the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Above

g *Moses said,* &c.] This circumstance is not recorded in the Mosaic history. Some imagine, that the apostle received it by Divine revelation; and others resolve it into a tradition, the truth of which his inspiration enabled him to distinguish, Mr. Calvin supposes Moses spoke these words in the name of the *people.*

h *Mount Sion.*] There seeems to be throughout this whole period a reference to the manifestation God made of himself upon Mount Sion, as being milder than that upon mount Sinai. And the heavenly society with which Christians are incorporated is considered as resembling the former, (that is, Mount Sion,) in those circumstances, in which it was more amiable than the latter. Sion was the *city of God.* In the temple, which stood there, cherubim were the ornaments of the walls, both in the *holy, and most holy* place, to signify the presence of *angels.* There was a general assembly and congregation of the *priests,* which were substituted instead of the first-born, of whose *names, catalogues* were kept. There was God, as the supreme Judge of controversies, giving forth his oracles. The *high priest,* was the Mediator between God and Israel, (compare Luke i. 8--10,) and the *blood of sprinkling* was daily used.

i *The general assembly :* πανηγυρει.] The learned Albert shows, (*Obser. Philolog.* p. 441,) that this word properly signifies a stated convention upon some *joyful* and *festival* occasion; particularly that it is applied to the concourse at the *Olmpic games.* In which view it expresses a very lively and elegant opposition to the case of the Israelites, who were struck with a general terror, when they were convened before Mount Sinai.

k *First-born.*] *Saints* are called the *first-born,* because, under the law, the first-born were peculiarly appropriated to God, and heirs of a double honour, and inheritance.

l *Just*

SECT. XX.

Heb. XII. 23.

Above all, it is to be remembered, that ye are come *to God, the* supreme *Judge of all*, from whose sentence there can be no appeal; *and to the spirits of the righteous*, whose guilt being entirely expiated, they are *made perfect* [l], and complete both in holiness and happiness, so far as may consist with the separate state, in which they are joyfully waiting the appearance of their Lord. To this society you are related, *and* ye shall shortly arrive at that world where it holds its supreme residence; since you have happily drawn near *to Jesus, the Mediator of the new* and better *covenant*, far exceeding that established with Israel of old by the mediation of Moses; *and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel* [m]; crying for pardon, whereas his cried aloud for vengeance.

24 And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel.

24

And since this is the nature of the dispensation under which ye are now brought, let me solemnly charge it upon you, to *see to it, that ye reject not him that speaketh* to you, with these circumstances of endearment as well as solemnity; *for if they escaped not* capital punishment *who rejected him that*, by Divine inspiration, *gave forth oracles on earth*, [n] *how much more* [*shall*] *we not be able to escape*] *if we turn away from him* [*that speaketh to us*] *from* his throne in *the*

25

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape* if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven.

l *Just men made perfect.*] *Justified* before God, *sanctified* in their natures, and *holy* in their lives. Dr. Watts thinks the apostle here uses the expression *just*, or *righteous*, to intimate that he included the patriarchs, or Jewish saints; and that there was a peculiar propriety in doing it as he is writing to the Hebrews. *Watts's Death and Heaven*, p. 72.—Mr. Baxter urges this as a proof of the distinct *existence* of the soul in a *separate* state.

m [*Blood of*] *Abel.*] By this some understand the *blood of sacrifices* in general called the *blood of Abel*, because he is the first of whose animal sacrifices we read: But there is a harshness in that expression not easily paralleled; I should therefore rather understand it of the blood of *Abel himself*, as referring to the gentle and gracious character of Christ, and the blessings, instead of vengeance, drawn down by his blood. There is certainly some *transposition* of what one would have thought the most natural order here; but it must be ascribed to the rapturous manner in which St. Paul conceived of these things, and his *fulness* of matter when he touched upon them.

n *Him that gave forth oracles on earth.*] This is generally expounded of Moses. Mr. Pierce refers it to God; since it is said, *his voice there shook the earth*, which he saith, must be the voice of God. And the argument of the *apostle*, according to him, is taken from the different manner of speaking; his speaking *on earth* being accompanied with *earthly* signs, &c. whereas his speaking *from heaven* means speaking *by Christ*, coming down from heaven, and declaring *heavenly things*, (John iii. 12, 31, 32: 1 Pet. i. 12,) more glorious than the *law*. (2 Cor. iii. 6,—11.) But it may be *objected*, that God spoke to them *from heaven*, when he gave the law at Mount Sinai, and that the words, *whose voice*, may refer to the latter clause, *Him that speaketh from heaven*. Yet even on this supposition, he that *speaketh from heaven*, must, I think, be *God*, since it is said, that his voice *shook the earth*, verse 26.

SECT. XX.

the heavens? If all indignities done to Moses, a mortal man, when speaking by Divine authority, were so severely avenged; how much more those offered to the Lord Jesus, who condescended to come down from heaven, and lay aside the glories in which he there dwelt, to undertake the office of our Law-giver, and our Mediator?

Heb. XII. 25.

26 And indeed the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom God has now spoken to us, is the Person that presided in that great solemnity of giving the law to which we have been referring. It was he, *whose voice then shook the earth*, and whose spirit inspired the prophets: *but now he hath promised, saying* by one of them, (Hag. ii. 6.) Behold, *yet once more I* make so thorough a reformation, that I may be said to *shake not the earth only, but also the heaven*[o]. For it is in such language that he hath chosen to represent the change of the Mosaic economy for that of the gospel. *And* it is evident, that *this* [*expression*] *yet once more*, or for the last time, not only *signifies the removal* and change *of the things* there said to be *shaken*[p], that is, of the ordinances of Moses, *as of things which were* made and *constituted* only for a time[q]; but also strongly intimates, that he would introduce thereby a dispensation to be changed

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot

o *Shake not the earth only, but also the heaven.*] This *shaking* must refer to the *alterations* made in the *constitution* of religion, and be considered not as introductory to, but consequent upon, the coming of the Messiah. Many think this refers to the *new heavens and earth*, or the state of glory to be at length introduced. Grotius explains it of the extraordinary *phænomena* in the *heavens*, and on the *earth*, at the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, and mission of the Spirit, as in part an accomplishment of this prophecy. But there would be great room to debate, how far these were more *extraordinary*, than the commotions on giving the Mosaic law. I therefore chose to adhere to the other, as the most probable *interpretations*.

p *Of the things shaken:* σαλευομενων] The *original word* is very elegant and expressive; it being, as the learned Bos observes, (*Exercitat. Philolog.* p. 259,) a *metaphor* taken from *ships at anchor*, which though they are secured from being driven away, yet are in a *fluctuating condition* and *tossed up and down*, within a certain compass, by the force of the wind and waves.

q *As of things* made and *constituted* only for a time.] Bos imagines that there is in the original a mistake of the transcribers, and for ως πεποιημενων, *as of things which were made*, he would read πεπονημενων, *as of things shattered and worn out*, namely, by being *tossed and shaken*, and therefore wanting to be changed and repaired. And thus he supposes there is a continuation of the *metaphor*, which is mentioned in the *note* above. But conjectural emendations, supported by the authority of not a single *manuscript*, are not to be admitted, without evident necessity. Mr. Pierce justly remarks, that ποιειν is frequently used for *appointing* or constituting, as in chap. iii. 2; Mark iii. 14, and many other places; and that πεποιημενων being a *participle of the preterperfect tense*, ought not to have been translated, *Things which are made*, as in our English version, but *Things which were or had been made*, or *constituted* and appointed, for a time; and I have rendered and explained it accordingly.

r As

cannot be shaken may remain.

ed no more, *that the things not to be shaken* any more, *might* be set up, and *remain* fixed on a perpetual basis; even that eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace, which God hath established by Christ Jesus his Son. *As therefore we have received* such *an unshaken kingdom*, which shall never be removed to make way for any different establishment, and which gives us the assurance of a reign in eternal glory, *let us* see to it, that we *have grace whereby we may serve God*, from whom we receive it, *in an acceptable manner*. As that grace is so freely offered to us[r], let us not be so wanting to ourselves as to fall short of it. And while we feel our hearts inspired with all that gratitude and confidence, which suits the genius of so merciful a dispensation, let them be attempered *with* a becoming mixture of *reverence and pious fear;* that we may not, by an unworthy abuse of the gospel, deprive ourselves of its invaluable blessings, and sin beyond all possibility of farther remedy. *For* though *our God* manifests himself in the beams of such mild majesty, he [*is*] still possessed of that tremendous power, which was so awfully displayed at mount Sinai, and will break forth as *a consuming fire* against all those that presumptuously violate his laws, and despise his gospel. Deut. iv. 23, 24.)

SECT. XX.

Heb. XII. 27.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear:

28

29 For our God *is* a consuming fire.

29

IMPROVEMENT.

THE *glories* of the eternal Jehovah are indeed inconceivable and immutable. Still he is possessed of all that awful *majesty* which he displayed on *mount Sinai*, and able in a moment, as a *devouring fire*, to consume the transgressors of his law. But though he kindly reminds us of this dreadful scene, he does not limit and confine our views to it: he appears to us, not on *that mountain*, which was involved in *blackness*, and *darkness*, in *tempest* and *fire:* but calls us to the milder glories of *mount Sion*. Yet even there might our consciousness of guilt cause us to fear. How should we appear in *the city of the living God*, or presume to mingle ourselves with *the general assembly and church of the first-*

Ver. 29

18

22

r As grace is so freely offered.] This is *strongly* intimated in the words of the *exhortation*; else there could be no room for it. And this *oblique* intimation, in which it is, as it were, taken for *granted* that we may certainly *have grace*, if we take *proper* methods for obtaining it, appears to me peculiarly affecting.

SECT. XX. *first-born?* How should we hope for a place among *myriads of angels*, and the *perfected spirits of the just*, in the presence of 23 *God, the Judge of all*, if it were not for the refuge and support, 24 which we find in *Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant*, and in *the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than* the blood 26 of *Abel?* But being thus encouraged, let us draw near with humble *boldness*, though with *reverence and godly fear;* while we 28 hear the *voice that once shook the earth*, speaking to us in accents of love, and promising a *kingdom* that cannot be moved. That kingdom do we in some degree receive now, and we hope for the full possession hereafter. It shall indeed be obtained, if we learn so to value it, as in the expectation of it, *to serve God acceptably*, in the improvement of that *grace*, which awaits us, to make us equal to his service: only let us *see to it*, that we do not, by our own criminal negligence, *fail of that grace;* that we do not 15 *profanely* and foolishly follow the example of that wretched *Esau*, who stands recorded with so much infamy, as having *for one* sorry 16 *meal sold his birth-right*, with all his sacred privileges. How many sons of *Abraham*, having followed him, have found, as he did, the impossibility of retrieving so fatal a bargain; found, as he did, 17 that there was *no place of repentance, though they* may have *sought it carefully with tears;* with an anguish of heart, which none can conceive, but they who know what final and everlasting despair means. May God preserve all his churches from such *roots of* 15 *bitterness*, as, alas! have too often *sprung up* among them! And since there is so much danger, that *many may be defiled* by them, let those that have a real concern for their honour and safety, be looking round, with a proper solicitude to guard against the first appearance of what may be so fatal to their honour, their purity and their peace.

SECT. XXI.

The Apostle exhorts Christians to brotherly love, purity, compassion, dependence on the Divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, and to a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man; from a consideration of the inestimable privileges derived to us from Christ, which ought always to encourage us boldly to endure any infamy and suffering which we may meet in his cause. Heb. XIII. 1—16.

HEBREWS XIII. 1.

SECT. XXI. I SHALL conclude my present address to you, with some practical exhortations. And one

Heb. XIII. 1.

HEBREWS XIII. 1. LET brotherly love continue.

of

of the most comprehensive and important I can give you, is this: *Let brotherly love* always *continue*[a] among you. And remember not only the common obligations of benevolence, by which all human creatures are connected with each other, but those peculiar engagements, which the Christian profession lays you under, to study the good of those, who by faith in the gospel are all the children of one Father, and heirs of one glorious inheritance. This should certainly engage you to relieve and accommodate such as are in necessity; and especially your christian brethren, in their travels from place to place, often undertaken for the service of their great Master. *Be not*, therefore, *forgetful of hospitality; for some have*, by the practice of it, *entertained angels*, as common strangers, *without knowing it*[b], and have found the hospitalities of many former years abundantly rewarded by one such favourable visit. And thus you know not, but they who come to you under a very mean appearance, may be as messengers from God to you, and the instruments of bestowing some extraordinary favours from him. You see many of your brethren suffering for conscience sake, and some thrown into prison; *remember them* therefore especially, *who are in* such *bonds*, *as* if you were yourselves *bound with* [*them*] *and them that suffer* any kind of *ill-treatment* in such a case, *as being yourselves also in the* same *body* with them, and so obliged to a tender sympathy; not now to insist on your sharing the same common infirmities of human nature with them all, which should engage you to carry your compassion to strangers, and even to enemies.

SECT. XXI.

Heb. XIII. 1.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

2

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

3

I

a *Let brotherly love continue.*] Diodate thinks this exhortation was peculiarly suitable to *converted Jews* as the *prejudices* against their Gentile brethren were in many of them so strong, that they were ready to disown them with abhorrence.

b *Entertained angels unawares.*] It is possible that from the story of Abraham and Lot, who had the honour of entertaining *angels*, under the form of ordinary travellers, some tradition might reach the Indian Bramins, who tell their people that the *gods* sometimes descend in the form of poor indigent *persons*; and that when any of the children of men relieve them, they repay the charity with vast advantage. See *Millar's Propagation of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 217. I can lay no stress upon Mr. *Pierce's* reasoning against our supposing that Christ was one of those *angels*, that then the *apostle* would have urged the argument in a stronger view, by observing that they had *entertained Christ himself*. (See his *notes* on chap. i. ver. 2. and Mr. *Hallet* on this verse.) For the *apostles* were under no obligation, on all occasions, to use the *strongest* argument that could possibly be thought of; and as there might perhaps be some room to debate this matter, it was great prudence to build an argument upon a *principle*, in which all that believe the authority of *scripture*, must agree.

c *Marriage*

SECT. XXI.

I know that some, who pretend to more than ordinary chastity, say many reproachful things of a conjugal life; but I assure you they are much to blame; for *marriage* [*is*] to be held *honourable in all*[c], *and the* proper use of the *marriage bed* is to be esteemed as *undefiled*; since none can imagine, that God would make an action in itself morally evil, absolutely necessary for the support of the human race in future generations. *But* as for *whoremongers and adulterers*, who either despise or pollute it, *God will* undoubtedly *judge* them, however they may escape human punishment.

Heb. XIII. 4.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 [*Let your*] *conversation* [*be*] *free from* every degree of *covetousness*, and [*be*] *contented with such things as ye have*[d], without eagerly or impatiently desiring what Divine Providence may see fit to with-hold. And though being so slenderly provided for, as most of you are, it may seem very probable you should soon come to want, even the necessaries of life, especially after the late ravages you have suffered from your enemies, who have plundered your goods, (chap. x. 34;) be not anxiously solicitous about that; *for he* who hath all the stores of nature at his command, and who owns the relation of a Father to us, *hath* graciously *said*, (Josh. i. 5,) *I will not, I will not leave thee, I will never,*

6 *never, never forsake thee.* And though these emphatical words were at first spoken to Joshua yet it was not under a personal character only, but considering him in his relation to the Israel of God, and as acting for its support; *so that* all God's people, as his love to them is in all ages the same, may take a just encouragement from it, and *we* in particular *may take courage to say*[e], *the Lord* [*is*] *my helper, and I will not*

5 *Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness: *and be* content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will

c *Marriage is honourable.*] Some *critics*, and (especially the *popish writers*, to avoid the argument which naturally arises from hence against *forbidding marriage* to the *clergy*) would render it, *Let marriage be honourable in all, and let the bed be undefiled.* But the connection of the latter clause introduced by the particle *but*, is sufficient to vindicate our *version*, unless we should be disposed, with the Vulgate, to prefer the authority of the Alexandrian and Clermont copies, which instead of δε, read γαρ, *For whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

d *Content with such things as ye have.*] Phocylides makes use of the very words of the *apostle* in a precept of this kind, Αρκισθαι παρεουσιν. But what the age of that writer was, I fear it is impossible to ascertain. There are other *passages* however in his *excellent moral poems*, which makes it probable he was acquainted with the New Testament as well as the Old, from whence he has taken so many *pious* and *humane precepts.*

e *We may take courage to say*, &c.] This application of a *particular* promise to such *general* purposes, opens a *noble hint* for

will not fear what man shall do unto me.

not fear what man shall do unto me: thus comforting ourselves, not only in the seeming uncertainty of future supplies, but in the midst of the greatest dangers, and when threatened by our enemies with the severest sufferings. SECT. XXI. Heb. XIII. 6

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

And let me now urge you to *remember those* 7 dear and venerable persons, *who having* formerly *presided over you* [f] in holy things, *have spoken to you the word of God, whose* course is now finished. Though all your intercourse with them is for the present cut off, do not however forget their instructions and their examples; but be mindful of that *faith* which they taught, and which they exercised. And let it be your great care to *imitate* them, *considering the end of their conversation.* Reflect on the happy manner in which they quitted life, on that support which they found, in their latest moments, from the truths they had taught you, and on that heroic resolution with which some of them were animated to meet even martyrdom itself in that sacred cause; and let the remembrance of these things engage you stedfastly to retain their faith and courageously to follow their steps. And 8 remember for your farther encouragement, that though the most faithful ministers of the gospel die, yet as that sacred dispensation still continues immutable, so *Jesus Christ*, the great Guardian of those who faithfully adhere to it, in the tenor of his declarations, as well as in the glories of his Divine nature, [*is*] *the same* [g] *yesterday, to day, and for ever;* and therefore can well support you, by whomsoever you may be forsaken. And let this be a powerful engagement

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

for the improvement of the Old Testament; upon this great and solid *principle*, that *God*, who is *no respecter of persons*, intends, that expressions of his favour to *this* or *that* eminently good man, should be used for the encouragement of *all others* of the *like* character. The emphasis of the *original* is so well known, that I shall not insist upon it.

f *Presided over you.*] Bishop Lloyd, (*Funeral Sermon* for Bishop Wilkins, p. 7, 8,) thinks this may refer to *James the Apostle*, and to *James*, commonly called the *first Bishop of Jerusalem*; both of which had been put to death there before this epistle was written. Our English version here is very far from being justifiable, *Remember them which have the rule over you:* whereas they were now dead. It should have been, *Who have presided, or had the rule, over you*; or as I have rendered the two clauses in connection, *Who having presided over you, have spoken to you the word of God.*

g *Christ the same.*] I think this makes a much nobler sense, if explained of the immutability of Christ's power and grace, than if merely understood of his *doctrine*; though I have given a hint of the latter sense, out of regard to some great *expositors*, who have urged Acts v. 42; 2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 24; as instances in which Christ signifies not his *person* but his *word.*

h *Whose*

SECT. XXI.

ment to adhere to his gospel, and to preserve it uncorrupted. In this view, see to it, that ye *be not carried about by various and foreign doc-*
Heb. XIII. 9. *trines*, disagreeing with each other, and with the great standard of truth in the Divine revelation. Many are zealous *for* such, and particularly Judaizing teachers; but remember, [*it is*] *a good thing that the heart be established in* an adherence to the *grace* of the gospel, and *not* zealous *in* those distinctions between various kinds of *meats*, and reposing its confidence in those ritual observances which some are ready to lay so much stress upon; but *by which they, who have been* most *conversant* [*in them*] and regarded them with the greatest exactness, *have not profited*, so as to make any real attainment in religion, by all that scrupulosity and mortification. They boast indeed of many of their privileges, in which they think themselves superior to us; but it is infinitely more than a balance to all, that *we have an altar* of a spiritual nature, even that dignified by the sacrifice of the Son of God, *of which they have no authority to eat, who attend* divine *service in the tabernacle.* For it is well known, that *the bodies of those animals, whose blood* [*being offered*] *for sin is carried*[h] *by the high Priest into the holy place, are* according to the appointment of the law, as instituted in the wilderness, to be *burnt without the camp*, and afterwards without the city of Jerusalem; no part of them being eaten by the priests. Now methinks there is something in this circumstance which may suggest to us matter of pious and comfortable meditation, when we compare it with what we know of the great High Priest of our profession. We may *therefore* methinks say, that *Jesus also, that* under his grand sacerdotal character *he might sanctify the people*, not by animal victims, but *by his own blood*, which he offered up as a sin-offering for us, to atone our guilt, and consecrate us to God, *suffered* not within the walls of the temple, or the city, but upon mount Calvary, which you well know lies *without the gate* of

9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

10 We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.

11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp.

12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

h *Whose blood—is carried, &c.*] An argument has been drawn from these *words*, as from some other passages that occur, to prove that the *temple* was standing when this *epistle* was written.

i *Sacrifice*

13 Let us go forth therefore unto him, without the camp, bearing his reproach.

of Jerusalem. And this consideration, as it suggests our leaving the Jewish sacrifices, so it should undoubtedly engage us willingly to suffer all extremities in his cause. *Let us therefore* break through every attachment, *and go out*, as it were, *unto him without the camp, bearing* our part in *his reproach.* If our fidelity to him require, as it very possibly may, that we should submit to excommunication, infamy, and persecution, let us acquiesce and find an equivalent in this thought, that we are hereby rendered more conformable to Christ.

SECT. XXI.

Heb. XIII. 13.

14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

And let us submit to this so much the more chearfully, considering how trivial the interests of this mortal life are, when compared with those which relate to eternity; *for* it is most certain, that *we have here no abiding city*; in which view, I spoke of our sojourning here, as an encampment in moveable tabernacles or tents. *But*, blessed be God, *we* are animated with the chearful hope and expectation of better blessings, and *seek one to come*; a splendid and secure abode, where it will be our everlasting business to admire and adore its great Founder and Sovereign, and to worship in his celestial temple. In the mean time, Jesus is there under the character of our great High Priest, who ever lives to perform that important office for us, to which he is every way equal; *by him therefore let us always offer the sacrifice of praise*[i] *to God, that is, the fruit of* [*our*] *lips, giving thanks to his* glorious *name. But* while we present this verbal tribute, let us remember, that another yet more substantial is required. *Be not* therefore *forgetful of doing* all the *good* you possibly can, in your respective stations, *and of communicating* liberally and chearfully of your substance, to those that are in necessity; *for God is well pleased with such sacrifices*; which were always more pleasing to him than any victim, which, in the neglect of these, could be brought to his altar.

14

15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to his name.

15

16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for which such sacrifices God is well pleased.

16

IMPROVE-

i *Sacrifice of praise.*] To suppose that this refers to the *eucharist*, and the following verse to *charitable collections* made at the celebration of that ordinance, seems very *fanciful.*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. xxi.

Ver. 16

1, 2

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8

12

14

THOSE other *expensive* sacrifices which the *Mosaic law* required, are now entirely abrogated. Let us consider this as an additional engagement upon us, to abound more and more in those of unfeigned *benevolence* and real *charity;* rejoicing, that the God of our lives, who gives us all, will condscend to have *any regard* to them. And let our brethren in *Christ be remembered* with that distinguishing affection which suits the relation in which we stand to them; and in whatever bonds of affliction they may be *bound*, let us endeavour to make their fetters sit *lighter* upon them, by every thing which our compassionate assistance can do for that purpose; *considering ourselves as in the body.*

That we may be ready to all such kind offices, let us endeavour to overcome *the love of money, which is the root of all evil.* Let us learn, (and Oh that Divine grace may effectually teach us!) to moderate our desires, *to be contented* with what Providence allots us, whether more or less, *and to trust in God*, as to the supply of our future wants. Well may we not only *trust*, but even *boast in him*, when we consider in how endearing a manner he hath declared, with such reiterated assurances, *that he will never never, never leave us;* that *he will not, yea, he will not forsake us.* Surely the language of the most chearful and courageous *faith* well corresponds to that of so gracious and soul-reviving a promise. Let *faith* then put a *reality* into it, or rather glory in that certain reality which there cannot but be in every promise; especially as *Jesus Christ*, in whom this, and *all the promises* are confirmed to us, is *the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.*

And let this thought support us under those *breaches* which may be made on the church by *death. Christ* ever lives to guard and protect it, and to maintain those great truths which in every age have been the joy and confidence of his people. Let our attachment to him therefore, be preserved inviolable, and the purity of our souls unspotted. And let us never fear to share in his *reproach*, in whose glory we have such a security of sharing; but cheerfully go, as it were, *out of the camp* to him, who *suffered crucifixion* for us *without the gates* of the city. Were we called to endure *martyrdom* for his sake, he would only lead us out of a mean and precarious tabernacle; *for we have here no continuing city*; but then he will conduct us, if we are faithful to him, to a *city*, so durable, that its *foundations* are represented by rocks of solid *gems*, so glorious, that its *pavements* are described as *gold*, and its *gates* as *pearl.* May our faith be daily beholding it as near; and

and may we feel every day more of its *attractive* influence, to render us superior to all that earth can promise, and to all it can threaten, while we are passing thither. Under his guardianship, let us daily *be offering the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, as well knowing, that while we are on our journey to the *New Jerusalem*, no mountain can be so steep and rugged, no valley so deep and gloomy, as not to admit of the *songs of Sion.* SECT. XXI. Ver. 15

SECT. XXII.

The Apostle concludes with recommending to them some particular regards to their pious ministers, and intreats their prayers ; adding some salutations, and a solemn benediction. Heb. XIII. 17, *to the end.*

HEBREWS XIII. 17.

OBEY them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may

HEBREWS XIII. 17.

SECT. XXII.

I HAVE been urging you to an affectionate remembrance of those who were once your teachers, but are now dismissed from their labours, and received to their reward. And I must on the same principles, press upon you a due regard to those faithful ministers who still survive. *Obey them*, therefore, *who preside over you*[a], in those rules and directions which they are authorised by Christ to give you, *and submit yourselves* [*to them*] with a becoming respect ; even though their office should sometimes oblige them to make such addresses to you as may for the present be disagreeable. *For they* are solemnly appointed to *watch for your souls*[b], for their everlasting safety and happiness. And well knowing that the trust is of infinite importance, they would execute it *as those that must render an* awful and strict *account* of their office, and of the fidelity with which they have discharged it. Behave towards them, therefore, while Heb. XIII. 17.

a *Preside over you.*] Lord *Barrington* imagines, that he refers to the *apostles of the circumcision*, to shew that he would not in any respect derogate from their authority ; (Essay I. p. 87;) but I cannot think the word ηγουμενοι, should be thus limited. I rather apprehend, with Mr. *Boyse*, (Serm. Vol. I. p. 415,) that it refers to those who *immediately presided* over them in their religious affairs, that is, the *ministers* of the several particular churches. The application of it to *diocesan bishops* is merely arbitrary.

b *Watch for your souls.*] Chrysostom says, he never read these words without *trembling*, though he often preached several times in a day.

c *That*

SECT. XXII.

while they are pursuing the several duties of it, in such a manner, *that they may do it with joy, and not with* inward *groaning*[c], under discouragements arising from your unkind treatment, or from such other irregularities of your conduct as may require them to interpose by any methods of severity; *for that* [*is*] most *unprofitable* and dangerous *for you*, and will on the whole be much more for your own detriment than it can possibly be for theirs.

Heb. XIII. 17.

may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

18 Among the rest of your Christian ministers, we persuade ourselves that you will not forget us. And we intreat, that while absence may render many other instances of affection impracticable, you would not fail however to *pray for us.* And indeed we may very cheerfully ask, and very reasonably expect this; *for* though our enemies may meanly insinuate the contrary, *we are confident, that we have a good conscience,* and have conducted ourselves, so as to have a testimony to our integrity in yours, that we are *determined,* whatever it may cost us, *in all things to behave honourably,* to converse in the most fair and reputable manner, according to the obligations of our sacred profession and office, though we should sacrifice every thing to that

18 Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

19 resolution. *And I especially beseech you to do this,* that is, to pray earnestly and affectionately for me, both in your private retirements, and in your public assemblies, *that I may quickly be restored to you* from this confinement, and may have an opportunity of rendering you those services which were prevented by this unjust imprisonment, occasioned by the fury of the populace when I was last at Jerusalem.

19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

20 And *now* to draw towards a close, *may* that great and blessed Being, who condescends in his gospel to reveal himself to us under the endearing character of *the God of peace, who* reconciling us unto himself by his Son, becomes the author of eternal blessings, cause his choicest favours

20 Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our

c *That they may do it with joy, and not with groaning.*] This must necessarily refer to the present discharge of their office; for it is not possible for any *perverseness* of the people to prevent a faithful minister's *giving up his account with joy.* Nor can any *groans* be mingled with those *triumphant songs* which God will put into the mouths of all his people. But their Master will remember *what* they suffered by their *people's* means; and the *account* may sit heavy on *them*, when the sorrows of their faithful pastors are all over. Not to say, that great *present damage* to the people would proceed from those things which are *grievous* to their faithful and affectionate *spiritual guides.* See Dr. *Owen in loc.*

our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

favours to descend upon you. May he, who to confirm these gracious purposes, *hath brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus* Christ, who is constituted *that great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant*[d], and by his blood sealed the everlasting and unchangeable covenant, which appoints him to stand in that amiable relation to his people; May he, I say, *make you perfect in every good work, that you may* cheerfully and constantly *do his will*, exerting an holy readiness and alacrity in the discharge of every duty; himself *producing in you that* temper and disposition of soul *which is* most pleasing and *acceptable in his sight*, through the powerful influences of his Spirit, given you *by Jesus Christ*, who hath procured this invaluable favour for his people: *to whom* [*be*] *glory* in all the churches, *for ever and ever: Amen.*

SECT. XXII.

Heb. XIII. 20.

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21

22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

I have discovered my mind to you in the course of this epistle with great freedom; *but* as it all proceeds from the most sincere affection, *I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written to you* above *in a few words;* but if I were to open all that is in my heart, the letter would swell far beyond the bounds I have here assigned it. In concluding it, I give you the pleasure to *know that* [*our*] dear *brother Timothy*, whose zeal for me had for a while made him a partner in my confinement, *is* now *set at liberty, with whom if he come soon*, I hope by the Divine permission *I shall* be able to *see you*, which I cannot but greatly desire.

22

23 Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

23

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

In the mean time, *salute* in the most respectful and affectionate manner, in my name, *all that preside over you*, as the officers of your respective churches, *and all the* other *saints*, who are private members of them. *They* who are natives *of Italy*, joined in the bonds of the same Christian profession, and now with me at Rome, most cordially *salute you.* May the blessing of God, and the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I am so often commending you and all my

24

25 Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

25

[d] *By the blood of the everlasting covenant.*] There is an *ambiguity* in the connection of these words. Some think they refer to *God's bringing again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ*, according to that *engagement* or *covenant* which was sealed by his *blood.* Beza and others connect the clause with the words immediately preceding, namely, *that great Shepherd of the sheep*, which our Lord was constituted by the *blood of the everlasting covenant.* And this sense seems to be far preferable. Compare Acts xx. 28; and John x. 11.

SECT. XXII.

my Christian brethren, [*be*] *with you all.* I put my hearty *amen* to it; and you assuredly know, that I can wish you nothing better. I hope therefore, that you will with all your hearts put your own amen to it.

Heb. XIII. 25.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET those, whom God, in the course of his Providence, hath called to *preside over* the souls of others, remember to *watch over them* with a becoming diligence, considering that an impartial *account* will shortly be required; considering, that if they do not properly conduct themselves in this important office, *their blood* who *perish* by their neglect, must be *required at their hands.* And let the *people* committed to their care be concerned, that the faithful servants of *Christ* may discharge their office *with joy, and not with grief;* that they may not from time to time be sent with *groanings,* and with tears, to the presence of their great Master, to *lament* the obstinacy, perverseness, and rebellion of those over whom God hath made them *watchmen* and *shepherds.* The grief would now sensibly affect the *minister;* yet, on the whole, as he would be to God *a sweet savour in Christ, in them that perish, as well as in them that believe,* the greatest detriment would fall on *those* who have made such ungrateful returns to the Divine goodness, and to *their* fidelity.

Ver. 17

That all other duties may be more regularly and properly discharged, let private Christians be engaged to *pray* earnestly *for their ministers;* for those especially, who make it apparent, that they desire to *maintain always a good conscience;* and that whatever sacrifices they may be called to make to it, they are *determined in all things to live reputably* and honourably, so that the *ministry may not be blamed,* but the Christian profession in general adorned. And God grant, that none but persons of *such* a character may be introduced into the *ministry,* or supported and countenanced in it!

18

Let *pastors,* and *people,* be often looking to him, who is *the great shepherd of the sheep,* and whose relation to the flock is established on *the blood of the everlasting covenant.* Ever may the thoughts of that *blood* engage us to regard him with all due veneration and love; ever may we be looking to him, who through this blessed Saviour, appears as *the God of peace,* for every blessing we respectively need.

20

We all need his gracious influence, to implant the first principles of the Divine life; and we need them, to *make us perfect to*

do

do his will, and to *work in us* those things which may render us more completely *pleasing in his sight*. And therefore let an humble dependence on his *grace* be daily maintained and expressed; considering of how great importance it is to be *acceptable* in the sight of God, and to *approve* ourselves at all times to him. SECT. XXII. 21

That it may be so, may *grace be with us all*, and continue with us, from the first entrance on the *Christian* life, through the whole course of it, till *it present us blameless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Amen.* 22

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE

JAMES.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

THE epistle of St. James, and the six following epistles, have been commonly distinguished by the appellation of *catholic* or *general*, because most of them are inscribed, not to particular churches, or persons, but to the body, either of Jewish or Gentile converts over the whole world, or at least dispersed in several countries.

The *first* of these, I mean that of St. James, was from the earliest times received by the Christian church, though not so universally as most of the epistles of St. Paul. But a precise detail and examination of the several arguments relating to this question, would bear too large a proportion in the space alloted to these introductions. It may however be right to observe, in support of the authenticity and authority of this epistle, that considerable stress hath deservedly been laid upon its *antiquity*, which appears both from *internal* and *external* evidence; and also, upon the correspondence of the sentiments it contains, with the tenour of the Christian doctrine; and though this hath been called in question by some through an attachment to particular hypotheses*, yet it is evident, I apprehend beyond all controversy, to those who read the epistle with suitable candour and attention. And it appears to me, that the authority of this, and some other parts of the New Testament, having been early questioned by some *primitive churches*, affords an argument of their particular caution, that no other writings should be admitted into the *sacred canon*, however excellent,

* It is well known, that at the beginning of the Reformation, Luther apprehending the doctrine delivered by St. James concerning *justification*, to be inconsistent with that of St. Paul, opposed the authority of this epistle, in the preface to his German translation of the New Testament, published in the year 1522; though he is not followed in this point by those who at this day are distinguished by his name; and indeed he himself, as we are informed by *Wolfius (Curæ Philolog* Vol. V p. 6,) and by *Fabricius, (Biblioth. Græc.* Lib. iv. cap. v. § ix. afterwards changed his opinion.

excellent, besides those which had an undoubted claim to that distinction; and justly challenges our deference to *their* judgment, who doubtless were most capable of deciding, and gave sufficient evidence of their *care* as well as their *capacity*. The epistle before us having passed through a severe and accurate scrutiny, appears to have been at length *universally received*, and accordingly hath been transmitted down to the present age, as an authentic part of those *oracles of God which are able to make us wise to salvation*.

If any particular arguments were to be suggested to second the force of those observations it might be this, that this epistle is found in the *Syriac version*, and was received by the churches in Syria. This version is undoubtedly ancient, and is apprehended by most learned men to have been made as early as the beginning of the *second century*. And besides the authority conciliated to the epistle of St. James by the *antiquity* of the version, it should be observed, that the version was made for the particular service of the converted Jews, to whom the *epistle itself* was originally written; and it should therefore seem, that its authenticity and authority were from the beginning acknowledged by those for whom it was intended: and I think it can hardly be doubted, that they were better judges of the question than the Gentiles, to whom it was not written, among whom therefore it was not likely to be propagated so early, and who at first might be prejudiced against it, because it was inscribed to the Jews.

If any are disposed to examine the several testimonies of the Christian Fathers, as to the authority of this epistle, they may find them collected with great fidelity and accuracy, by the learned Dr. Lardner, in the second part of his valuable work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*.

As to the *author* of this epistle, some have imagined it to be James the Elder, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John. But in this they are evidently mistaken. James the Elder was beheaded by Herod, in the year of our Lord 44; whereas this epistle was not written till a very considerable time afterwards. So early as the year 44, the gospel does not seem to have been propagated far beyond the bounds of Palestine; and it cannot be supposed there was any very large number of the Jews of the dispersion, who were then converted to the Christian faith: and though the epistle seems to have been intended in some measure for the general benefit of the *twelve tribes*, yet more especially for those among them who were *converts* to the Christian religion. Besides, it is intimated in the epistle itself, that the Jewish Christians were at this time sunk into very remarkable degeneracy, both in doctrine and practice, which is not likely to have been the case while they were under the first impressions of their conversion. And indeed in this epistle, there are some plain intimations that the destruction of Jerusalem was near at hand, chap. v. 1—8, which event was accomplished about the year 70; and from this circumstance we may reasonably conclude the *date* of this epistle to be about the year 60 or 61.

It

It therefore appears, that this epistle was not written by James the Elder, but must have been the composition of another James, called James the Less, who was the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, and is said to be the *brother*, that is, according to the latitude in which the Jews were accustomed to understand this expression, the *kinsman* of our Lord. See Mat. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3. And who is expressly numbered among *the twelve apostles*. See Mat. x. 2, 3; Mark iii. 17, 18; Luke vi. 14, 15; Acts i. 13. And though the time of this James being put to death is not absolutely certain, it is supposed by many learned men to have happened in the year 62, before St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Hebrews, which was in the year 63. And if this account be right, the date of his epistle cannot be later than I have already assigned it.

James the Less statedly resided at Jerusalem; whence he hath been stiled by some ancient fathers, *bishop* of that city, though without sufficient foundation, as we observed, (Vol. VIII. sect. 34, note [c].) Now James being one of the apostles of the circumcision, while he confined his *personal* labours to the inhabitants of Judea, it was very natural for him to endeavour by his *writings* to extend his services to the Jewish Christians, who were dispersed abroad in more distant regions. For this purpose there are *two points* which the *apostle* seems to have principally aimed at, though he hath not pursued them in an orderly and *logical* method, but in the free epistolary manner, handling them jointly or distinctly, as occasions naturally offered. And these were—"To correct those errors both in doctrine and practice, into which the Jewish Christians had fallen, which might otherwise have produced fatal consequences; and then to establish the faith, and animate the hope of sincere believers, both under their present and their approaching suffering."

And in prosecution of this *double view*, after inscribing the epistle to the twelve tribes in their dispersion, the *apostle* enters on his subject, by endeavouring to fortify their minds under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, of the readiness of God to commmnicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace in answer to the fervent prayer of faith, and by exposing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors; chap. i. 1—16. And then as a means of their stedfastness notwithstanding the most powerful temptations to apostacy, he exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue, especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly by bridling their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted, ver 17, *to the end*. And then the apostle, by an easy transition having glanced at some of their particular failings, takes the occasion of introducing cautions on sundry

dry other articles in which they needed reprehension; particularly against showing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observation of the Divine precepts, especially when the royal law of charity, or universal benevolence, was in question; chap. ii. 1—13. After this, as several of the Jewish Christians discovered a disposition to rest in an external and empty profession of religion, probably from an abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, he largely descants on the inefficacy of a mere *historical faith*, and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal salvation, ver. 14, *to the end.* And as such a barren profession is apt to inspire men with conceited and vain glorious sentiments of themselves, while they are destitute of every Divine habit and attainment, he deems it expedient to subjoin a caution to these Jewish Christians, against their being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and as spiritual pride tends to inflame men's unbridled passsions, and to set on fire their licentious tongues, he resumes and expatiates on a subject which he had before only slightly touched upon, recommending a strict government of the tongue as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance; chap. iii. 1—12. And in close connection with such a topic, it was very natural to inculcate, as the apostle does, a candid benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them: to restrain which, he recommends a humble application to God for Divine influences, ver. 13—chap. iv. 10. Suggesting particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions, which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin. And then as to afflicted and oppressed Christians, he encourages and exhorts them to wait patiently for the coming of the Lord, ver. 11.—— chap. v. 8. And concludes the epistle, with condemning prophane and vain swearing with recommending moderation, fortitude and prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation, ver. 9, *to the end.*

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

St. JAMES.

SECT. I.

The Apostle James endeavours to fortify the Christians to whom he writes, under those trials wherewith they would be exercised, by suitable representations of the benefit of those trials, and of the readiness of God to communicate all necessary supplies of wisdom and grace, in answer to the fervent prayer of faith: and by exposing the vanity of all wordly enjoyments, which often prove the means of ensnaring and ruining their possessors. James I. 1—16.

JAMES I. 1.

JAMES a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the

JAMES I. 1.

THIS epistle is written by *James* [a], who esteems it his honour to be *a* faithful *servant* and constant worshipper *of* the true and living *God, and of* his Son *the Lord Jesus Christ*; and is addressed with the sincerest affection *to the twelve tribes* [b] of Israel *in* this their state of *dispersion*

SECT. I.

James I. 1.

a *James.*] That is, as we have already observed, the *apostle James, the less*: whom antiquity, (I know not on what pretence,) calls *bishop of Jerusalem*; perhaps because he resided there more than most of the apostles. He was the *brother* of Christ: and it is said he was exalted to this office, on the death of *James the great*, beheaded by Herod. Acts xii. 2, 17.

b *Twelve tribes.*] Dr. Lardner, (*Credibility*, Vol. I. p. 223, &c.) very justly observes, that Josephus concludes the twelve tribes to be still in being, when he says, that *six* persons were sent out of every

SECT. i.

James I. 1.

persion [c]; so that he would have every son of Abraham according to the flesh consider it as addressed to him, and would himself be considered as *greeting* them all with the most cordial wishes of grace and peace; though especially as addressing himself to those whom the bond of the same Christian profession unites yet more strictly to the Author.

the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2 *My dear brethren, count it* matter of *all joy, when you fall into a variety of trials*, for the sake of the true religion, which so many, instead of embracing with a becoming thankfulness and zeal, are by all possible methods endeavouring to extirpate. Far from being discouraged by such trials, in such a cause, rejoice in them, as *knowing that the* little and short *proof of your faith* to which it is now brought, in its natural consequences, under the influences of Divine grace, *worketh patience*, which will grow by such exercise. *And let patience have* [*its*] *perfect work*, that it may rise to its highest improvements; during this little space of time in which alone you will have an opportunity of glorifying God, and adorning Christianity, *that* so *ye may be perfect and complete, deficient in nothing:* for the other graces of Christianity will generally shine brightest where patience is most conspicuous.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5 *But if any one of you be deficient in wisdom* [d], and incable of certainly discerning his duty in such critical conjunctures as these in which you are called out to act; *let him ask* further supplies of [*it*] *from God*, its eternal fountain, *who gives to all* every necessary communication of that, and all other blessings, *liberally and upbraideth not* any with the importunity or frequency of their addresses; *and it shall be given*

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

every tribe, to assist in translating the scriptures into Greek. It is very evident that at the restoration in Zorobabel's time, *ten tribes*, stayed behind. See Dr. *Whitby in loc.*

c *In* this their state of *dispersion.*] Dr. *Whitby in loc*, hath some very pertinent quotations from Jesephus, Philo, and even Cicero, to shew that the Jews were dispersed abroad, and were to be found in great multitudes, in almost all parts of the world. And Dr. Lardner, besides the citations in Dr. Whitby, produces another remarkable passage to the same purpose, from a letter of Agrippa to the Emperor See *Credibility of the Gospel-history*, Part I. Book I. chap. 3. Compare Acts ii. 4—11.

d *If any of you be deficient in wisdom.*] Several interpret this of wisdom to bear afflictions well, and suppose, that when God is said *not to upbraid*, it is upon supposition of former impatience: but this though authorised by so great a name as Mr. Howe, see *his Works*, Vol. I. p. 690, is one of those limited interpretations which I cannot fully approve.

SECT. i.

James I. 6.

given him, so far as is needful for his safety, and the discharge of his duty. *But* then *let him* take care, that he *ask in* steady *faith, nothing wavering*, not divided by the desires of obtaining, and the fears of not obtaining the grace he asks, or doubting of God's readiness to bestow it; *for he that wavers*, and has not a firm confidence in the Divine goodness and faithfulness, can have no other solid and substantial support; but *is like a billow of the sea* [e] *driven on, and tossed by the wind*, in a restless and unsettled condition, (Isa. lvii. 20,) easily discomposed and agitated by every adverse blast, and in the greatest danger of being dashed in pieces.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

Let not that man therefore think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, while he continues in such a situation, and dares not trust in him for those supplies of grace which he professes to seek. These unworthy suspicions, as they wrong the Divine goodness, may in many instances prevent the communication of those favours which might otherwise be obtained. Such a *double-minded man*, whose schemes are divided between God and the world, and who cannot chearfully and resolutely commit himself, in confidence of Divine support, to be led whithersoever Providence shall please, [*is*] *unsettled in all his ways*; he will perpetually be running into inconsistencies of conduct, and those imperfect and undetermined impressions of religion which he feels, will serve rather to perplex and torment, than guide and secure him.

8 A double-minded man *is* unstable in all ways.

In nothing are the generality of men more apt to mistake, than in estimating the value of external circumstances; but let the principles of Christianity instruct you, my brethren, to correct that mistake; and in this respect, *let the brother of low degree*, of a poor and obscure condition, *rejoice in his exaltation*; let him think of his dignity as a christian, and entirely acquiesce in his low sphere of life, for his circumstances

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

e *Like a wave of the sea.*] Mr. Saurin paraphrases it thus: "He ought not to resemble the waves of the sea, which seem to offer to the spectator, that is upon the shore, the treasures with which they are charged; but soon plunge it into the abyss from which it cannot be recovered." *Saurin's Serm.* Vol. IX. p. 438. But the interpretation given in the *paraphrase*, appears to me much more simple and natural. He elsewhere paraphrases it, "Like a wave which moves on, and seems to come to the shore, but immediately returns with impetuosity into the gulph from whence it came. *Ibid.* Vol. V. p. 56, 57.

f *The*

SECT. i.

stances do really give him such advantages for religion, by placing him under a shelter from many temptations, that he has a much fairer probability than others, of rising to some emi-

James 1. 9.

10 nence in the heavenly world. *But* let *the rich* man be greatly cautious, and if he allow himself to rejoice, let it not be *in* the height of *his* circumstances; but in the *humiliation*[f] of his mind; for all other occasions of rejoicing are very precarious. And as for his distinction in this world, *as the flower of the grass he shall*

11 quickly *pass away. For* [*no sooner*] *is the sun risen with a scorching heat,* [*but*] immediately *the grass*, which in spring looks so fair and flourishing, *is dried up, and the flower thereof*, that adorned it, loses its painted glories yet much sooner; it *falleth* to the ground, *and* all *the beauty of its* lovely *form is perished; so shall the rich man also fade away in his paths*, and though he may by prudent management, or remarkable success, grow richer and richer, he dies in the midst of all his wealth, and it can no longer either delight or adorn him.

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is *no sooner* risen with a burning heat, *but* it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

You will be exercised with trials while you

12 continue in the present world; but repine not at them; *happy* [*is*] *the man who* with a proper steadiness and fortitude of mind *endures temptation; for being approved* by such a course of them as the infinite wisdom of God shall appoint, *he shall receive the crown of* eternal *life, which the Lord* Jesus Christ *has* graciously *promised to* all *them that love him*, and express their

13 love by such fidelity and zeal. *Let no man who is tempted, say, I am tempted of God*[g] *for God is* himself, by virtue of his boundless knowledge and almighty power, *incapable of being tempted by evils; and* such is the perfect rectitude

12 Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

f *The rich man in his humiliation.*] Mr. Pyle explains this of a rich man's being stripped of his possessions by persecution, and so reduced for the sake of his adherence to Christianity; but this seems not properly opposed to the *exaltation* mentioned above. Indeed in any view it must be allowed a very difficult passage. But I have preferred the *interpretation* which seemed to be least entangled,—and indeed to be most agreeable to the original, if we may rely on an observation made by Beza, and after him by Raphelius, (and they are both very critical judges of the Greek language,) that ταπεινωσις, the word here used by St. James, expresses rather the *disposition* of a man's *mind*, than his *state* and *condition*, which is properly ταπεινωσης; though it must be confessed, this distinction is not *always* observed.

g *Tempted of God.*] The *phrase* it seems had formerly been in use; and there is a sense in which it is *allowable*. But the obnoxious sense is so much more obvious, that the *apostle* thought proper to advise it should be avoided for the future. Perhaps the word might have *altered its signification*, as it is certain many words do.

h *Being*

tude and benevolence of his nature, that *he tempteth not any man;* but on the contrary, abhors all sin, and lays no man, in any imaginable circumstances,[g] under any necessity of committing it: *But every man is tempted* by the innate weakness of his own nature, in concurrence with the circumstance of life in which he is placed, *being allured by his own lusts, and* for want of wisely and resolutely opposing the first rising of them, being *ensnared*[h] to the actual commission of sin: *For* the gradation is much more swift and fatal than the generality of mankind are aware; and *indeed lust having conceived brings forth*, actual *sin*, by a speedy birth, where perhaps the full indulgence of it was not intended; *and sin, when it is finished*, or perpetrated[i], *is impregnated with death*, and tends in its consequences to the final ruin both of soul and body, as naturally as the conception of an animal does to the birth. *Therefore be not deceived*[k], *my beloved brethren*, by its flattering form, nor venture to trifle with temptations, under a fond conceit that you shall be able to break the connection, by stopping yourselves at pleasure in the advance of the danger, or recovering yourselves again when sin has been committed.

SECT. i.

James I. 13.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 14

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 15

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. 16

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us learn this holy *caution*, and guard against those baits of *lust* under which *death* is concealed; remembering that God has made us with a power of determining our own actions, that he *tempts none* to evil, nor appoints to any such *temptations* as he knows to be in their own nature *irresistible*. Be our spiritual enemies ever so powerful, or ever so artful, they cannot do us any hurt, till we betray *ourselves* into their hands. Yet certain it is, that their artifice and their power, in conjunction with the advantage which the corruption of our own hearts gives them, make it requisite, that conscious to ourselves of our *deficiency in wisdom*, we should *ask it*

Ver. 16, 14, 15, 13, 5

h *Being allured and ensnared:* εξελκομενος και δελεαζομενος] The original words have a singular beauty and elegance, containing an allusion to the method of *drawing fishes* out of the water with a hook, concealed under the bait, which they greedily devour.

i *Finished*, or perpetrated: αποτελεις-θεισα.] The word is used in this sense by Polybius, in a passage quoted by *Raphelius in loc.*

k *Therefore be not deceived.*] This is agreeable to the reading of the *Alexandrian manuscript*, which after μη inserts ουν, *therefore;* by which the connection is rendered more apparent.

SECT. i.

it of God. Let the *liberality* with which he gives it, and the *royal freedom* with which he has promised it, encourage us to ask it
Ver. with such constancy, that we may receive daily supplies; and
6, 7 with firm *confidence* in his goodness, that we may not *waver*, and *be like a wave of the sea tossed with the wind.*

Trusting in that supply of grace we receive from him, let us go
2 forth calmly and chearfully to meet such *trials* as the infinite wisdom of God shall appoint for us, how various and pressing soever
3, 4 they may be; remembering they tend to *improve our patience*, and by *patience* to *perfect* every other grace; and that if we be not overcome, we shall be *approved*, and made more meet to *receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him.*
12 And O, that the *love* of this blessed Lord, who has procured as well as promised it, may always render us superior to every trial, and *more than conquerors through him that hath loved us*, and thereby hath acquired to himself so just a claim to our supreme affection. With hearts faithfully engaged to him, and established in the
9, 10 firmest resolutions for his service, let us look with indifference upon those *worldly circumstances*, about which they who have no sense of a higher interest are exceedingly solicitous; and let us regulate our value of all the good things of life, by a regard to their *aspect* upon our religious characters and hopes.—If *low* circumstances may improve *these*, let us look upon them as *true exaltation;* and if wealth, and dignity, and applause, may endanger *these*, let us rather *fear* them, than aspire to them. Whatever we have obtained of those things which the men of the world are most ready to covet and admire, is transitory and *fading as the grass*, or even *as the flower of the field;* and sometimes like those beautiful, but tender productions of vegetable nature, is consumed by the *excess* of those causes to which it owes its existence and its beauty, "Give us, *O Lord, durable riches, and righteousness*, and that *honour which cometh from thee*, and is *immortal*, as its great Original."

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apostle exhorts them to remember and acknowledge the manifold goodness of God, in the various blessings bestowed upon them; more especially in that of his regenerating grace, which should constrain them to the exercise of every virtue; especially to an ingenuous and candid reception of his word, and a concern resolutely and constantly to adhere to its directions; particularly by bridling their tongues, and succouring such as were afflicted James I. 17. *to the end.*

JAMES I. 17.

EVERY good gift and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

JAMES I. 17.

SECT. ii.

James I. 17.

THAT ye may be fortified against every temptation, and may be animated to behave in a manner becoming your christian profession, remember, that *every good gift, and every perfect gift* which the children of men can receive, *is from above;* and the more compleatly excellent the benefit is, the more reason have they to acknowledge it, as *descending from the* great and eternal *Father of lights*[a], the blessed God, from whom reason and light and joy are derived. The sun itself is but a feeble image of his glory, *with whom there is no variableness, nor* so much as any *shadow of turning*[b], whereas the sun is continually varying, and has no sooner arrived to its meridian, but it begins to descend to the

a *Father of lights.*] It is the opinion of Glassius that this phrase only expresses the *majesty* and *glory* of God, as if the *apostle* had said, *The most illustrious and glorious Father.* But the accurate *Bos* most justly imagines, that the allusion to the *sun* which there is in the following words, begins here; and that the phrase refers to the *heathens* calling that glorious luminary, the *Father of light,* and the *author of light;* some instances of which he produces. See *Exercitat. Philolog. in loc.* The learned *Albert* cites a passage from Macrobius, in which the same title is applied to Jupiter. *Observ. Philolog. in loc.*

b *Every good gift,* &c.] It is observable that the *apostle* makes use of *two* different words to express *gift;* the one of which is more *poetical* and sounding than the other; and he has placed the words in such an order that they make an *heroic verse.* So that were they to be rendered, "*Every good gift, and every boon complete,*" it might perhaps give the English reader a more exact idea of the *original;* but as there is all imaginable reason to believe this was quite an accidental thing, I thought it might have the appearance of *affectation* to have endeavoured to retain it. As neither *boon* nor *present,* would have been proper in this connection, I know not how to render δοσις and δωρημα by different words: such is the poverty of our language, or the defect of my acquaintance with it. But the words, *a completely excellent benefit,* are inserted in the *paraphrase,* to preserve some little imitation of the *original.* As some learned men have observed that τροπης αποσκιασμα is something of an *astronomical phrase,* and refers to the different *aspects* of the *sun,* as it approaches one or the other *tropic,* (see Dr. *Bates's Works,* p. 747,) I have been careful to express that sentiment. It hath been the opinion of some persons that this is intended to oppose some *heretical* notion of the *influence of the stars* in the affairs of human life; but I know not that any such ridiculous conceit had so *early* a footing in the *church.*

c *Kind*

SECT. ii.

James i. 18.

the west, or to its summer height, but it verges towards the winter again; causing the direction of the shadows it occasions, proportionably to vary. But the immutable and everlasting God has condescended to multiply those favours upon us, as Christians, which should bind our souls to him in the bonds of unchangeable love; for *of his own* sovereign *will he impregnated us with the* powerful *word of* his Divine and evangelical *truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits*[c] *of his creatures*, more excellent than others, and in a peculiar manner separated and consecrated to him from among the rest of mankind. Let us be conscious of the honour he has hereby done us, and take heed that we do not sacrilegiously alienate ourselves from his
19 service. *Therefore, my beloved brethren*, that we may be thus religiously sacred to him, and ever employed to the purposes he has directed, *let every man be swift to hear* the instructions of his word, and all the good advices which may be given him agreeable to the tenor of it; but be *slow to speak*, guarding solicitously against every rash and especially every proud and dictatorial expression; and *slow to wrath*[d], not easily yielding to provocations, how injuriously
20 soever he may be treated; *For the wrath of man*, even where it may be most ready to assume the title of religious zeal, *worketh not*, but on the contrary greatly obstructs *the righteousness of God*[e]; instead of promoting the cause of true religion in the world, it is a reproach to it, and a means of exciting the pre-
21 judices of mankind against it. Endeavour *therefore* to regulate your passions by these great maxims; and *laying aside all* inward, or outward *filthiness* on the one hand, *and* all *overflowing of malignity*

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

19 Whe refore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness

c *Kind of first-fruits.*] It has often been observed, that this was addressed to the Jews who were first called to Christianity, before the gospel was preached to the Gentiles; but it will not follow, that all the *dispersed* of the *twelve tribes* to whom he addresses, were so called; and God did not intend there should afterwards be any distinction between them, and other Christians. I think it therefore much better to explain it, as referring to their Christian privileges in general.

d *Slow to wrath.*] It is well known that the *Jewish doctors* were apt to contend very *fiercely* about their different opinions; but it is indeed so much the *general* infirmity of human nature, as unhappy experience teaches us, that the caution is of *universal* concern.

e *Worketh not the righteousness of God.*] Some think the meaning is, simply, A man, who is often a prey to angry passions, is incapable of performing that *obedience* which God requires; but *promoting the interest of the kingdom of God* may be included in the meaning of *working his righteousness*; and this *false* zeal is so often defended under that *notion*, that I was willing in the *paraphrase* to point out that idea *plainly*.

f *In-*

meekness and ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

malignity on the other, compose yourselves *with all meekness* and gentleness of mind, to *receive the ingrafted word* [f]; that word, *which* when implanted in your minds by the influence of Divine grace, *is able to save your souls*, and will effectually form them to a meetness for a happy immortality. SECT. ii. James I. 21.

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your ownselves.

22 *But* then you must remember to *be doers of the word, and not hearers only*, sophistically *deceiving* and imposing upon *yourselves* [g] with an unprofitable attendance while it has no inward efficacy upon your hearts.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass;

23 *For if any one be* merely *a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like a man* carelessly *beholding his natural face in a mirror*, or glass, who sees some accidental spot upon it, which it would be convenient to wipe off.

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was

24 *For* his looking into the glass, and taking notice of it for the present, will signify nothing if *he beholds himself and goes away, and immediately forgets what manner of person he was*; forgets what rendered him disagreeable, and required to be corrected.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

25 *But he* is the wise and happy man, *who* bends down as it were his whole attention to this important matter, and is so set upon his own reformation and improvement, that he *looketh into the* gospel, that *perfect law of liberty* [h], by regarding which, the truest *and* noblest liberty is obtained, whatever confinement it may seem to lay us under: he, I say, who not only takes a transient view of its contents and designs, but *continues* [*therein*,] deeply reflecting upon it, and charging his own soul with its important doctrines

f *Ingrafted word*: εμφυτον λογον.] Some have translated this phrase, the *natural*, the *innate*, or *internal* word, referring to what hath been sometimes called, *the light within*; and it must be acknowledged that εμφυτος hath frequently this signification. But the *version* here given is undeniably justified by Bos and *Elsner in loc.* who illustrates this whole clause by some apposite and elegant quotations from the *classics*. The word of God is frequently compared to *seed*, or to a plant; particularly 1 Pet. i. 23; 1 John iii. 9; in which sense it is here said to be εμφυτος, *ingrafted*, or *implanted* in their minds.

g *Hearers only, deceiving*, &c.] The Jews did indeed place much of their religion in going up at proper times to the *synagogue to hear the law read*; and there may possibly be an allusion to that disposition. The exact signification of παραλογιζομενοι, is *imposing upon* any by *a sophistical* shew of argument; and here it is used with great propriety, as Mr. Superville has observed, Serm Vol. IV. p. 124. Yet Dr. Edwards tells us the Jewish writers have a proverb among them, that "he who hears the law, and does not practise it, is like a man, who plows and sows, but never reaps."

h Bends down his whole attention, and *looketh*, &c.] I have endeavoured in the *paraphrase* to express the *emphasis* of the original ὁ δε παρακυψας. [Compare 1 Pet. i. 12, where there is an evident allusion to the bending posture of the *cherubim*, who overshadowed the *mercy-seat in the holy of holies*.

i *Not*

SECT. ii.

James I. 25.

doctrines and precepts; *this man not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work* it enjoins: *this man*, I say, *shall be happy in his deed*, and shall find an advantage which mere speculative knowledge, though the most perfect and excel-
26 lent in its kind, could not possibly secure. But then remember, that when I speak of his deeds, I mean not on any account to excuse him from paying proper regard to his words; for it is necessary I should inculcate that *if any man among you seem to be religious, not* resolutely *bridling his tongue*, and reining it in, to prevent those sallies to which it may sometimes incline, *but deceiving his heart* [i] with an imagination that a freedom from other acts of iniquity or from gross profaneness and wickedness of speech, or that some good intention, notwithstanding his exorbitancies of this kind, will excuse him before God, even though he indulge himself in venting irregular passions under sacred names; *this man's religion* [*is*] but *vain*, and will stand him in no real stead, whatever complacency he may at present find in his reli-
27 gious pretensions. *Pure and undefiled religion*, that which is clear and without any flaw [k], or blemish, *before* the penetrating eyes of *God, even the Father*, consists not merely in speculations or forms, or in the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship [l]; but it *is this, to take the oversight of orphans and widows in their*

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and

i *Not bridling, but deceiving*, &c.] That excellent person and writer, Dr. *Butler*, the late *Bishop of Durham*, justly observes, that this is the proper *rendering* of the word; as if the apostle had said, It is impossible that any man should so much as *seem to be religious*, if he does not at least *think* that he *bridles his tongue*; but if he *deceive himself* in this important branch of religion, he is deceived in the *whole* of it. *Butler's Sermons*, Vol. IV. p. 58. And indeed so many *sins of the tongue* are committed without any apprehension of their being evil, that this caution, and this *remark* for the explication of it, is of great *importance*, considering how little many *zealots* seem to be aware of the great evil of *bitterly reproaching* their brethren upon account of their *religious* differences; the sin, which (as Mr. Baxter justly observes, see *his Works*, Vol. IV. p. 447,) the *apostle* seems to have had *particularly* in his view.

k Without any flaw.] Archbishop Tillotson has justly observed, that there seems here to be an *allusion* to the excellence of a *precious stone*, which consists much in its being καθαρα και αμιαντος, *clear*, and *without flaw*, or *cloud*. See *his Works*, Vol. II. p. 581.] And surely no *gem* is so precious or ornamental, as the *lovely* temper here described.

l *Pure and undefiled religion*—consists not merely in the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship.] The original word θρησκια, which in conformity with our translators, I have rendered *religion*, strictly signifies *Divine worship*; and intimates here, that no kind of religious service paid to the Deity, can be of any avail, if we neglect the *royal law of charity*, and to *visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*; an idea which I have endeavoured to preserve in the *paraphrase*.

m *To*

and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

their affliction [m], with a tender regard to their calamitous circumstances, [*and*] endeavouring to oversee them, in a manner as to provide for their relief, performing to others in distress suitable offices of kindness and charity; at the same time, taking a prudent care *to keep himself unspotted from* those bad practices, and irregular indulgences, which so generally prevail in *the world* about us, where so little either of religion or morality is to be found.

SECT. ii.

James I. 27.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH all gratitude let us direct our eyes and our hearts to *the unchangeable Father of lights*, and acknowledge *every good and every perfect gift*, as descending from him; but above all, the invaluable gift of his *regenerating grace*, to which, if we are the *first fruits of his creatures*, we are certainly indebted, and are thereby laid under the strongest engagements to *consecrate* ourselves continually to his service. Let us therefore listen with a most *obedient* regard to every intimation of his will, and set a guard upon all our *passions*, that they may move in sweet and harmonious subjection to it. Especially, let us be *slow to wrath*, and not imagine that we can be justified in the exorbitances of our angry transports, because they may possibly arise in the *cause of religion*. *The righteousness of God* is not to be promoted, but on the contrary, will be *disgraced and obstructed*, by such outrageous ungovernable sallies. Let every *impure and malignant* affection be therefore banished from our minds, and let us pray that the word of God may be so *ingrafted* into our souls, as to become the effectual means of our *salvation*. Let us not rest in a mere *forgetful hearing*, or indeed in an ineffectual *remembrance*; but having *looked into* the gospel, that *perfect law*, which by binding the soul, gives it the truest *liberty*, let us by Divine assistance *continue therein*, and improve to the immediate purposes of reformation, whatever knowledge we thereby gain; correcting whatever we observe *amiss* in ourselves. Particularly, let us study a proper command over our *tongues*, and cultivate those *charitable dispositions and offices*, in which *true and undefiled religion* is here said to consist; *that widows and orphans* may give us their

Ver. 17 18 19 20 21 22 25 26 27

m *To take the oversight of*, &c.] So ἐπισκεπτεσθαι properly signifies, and may import, entering into measures for their *subsistence*, as well as sometimes *going* to them, and *conversing* with them in their distresses. See the note on Mat. xxv. 36, Vol. VII. § 166, note d.

a The

SECT. ii. their blessing, as their guardians and friends; and that an *unspotted life, untainted* with the vices of a degenerate age, may bear witness, that though in the world, are we not of it, and that we act Ver. 25 in consistency with those sublime and holy ends to which we profess as *Christians* to aspire.

SECT. III.

He cautions them against shewing an undue respect to men's external circumstances, and resting satisfied in a partial observation of the Divine precepts; especially where the royal law of charity or universal benevolence was in question. James II. 1—13.

JAMES II. 1.

SECT. iii. James II. 1. *MY brethren*, let me now caution you, that you *hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, [*the great Lord*] *of glory* [a] *in a* partial *respect of persons*, so as to give undue preference to any upon account of their external circumstances; whereas the relation in which the meanest of your fellow Christians may stand to him, who is so glorious a personage as the Son of God, should certainly recommend them to your re- 2 gard and esteem. *For* I have observed something of this kind among many, which seems to require such an admonition as this; and have seen, that *if a man come into your synagogue* [b], when you are met for religious worship, *with a gold ring* [c], [*and*] other parts of a *splendid dress and* at the same time *there come in also a poor man*

JAMES II. 1.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel; and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment:

a The Lord *of glory*.] Dr. Whitby would render it, *The glorious faith of our our Lord Jesus Christ;* but I cannot think that by any means necessary.

b *Into your synagogue*.] Mr. Cradock and Dr. Whitby explain this of their *judicial* assemblies, which the Jews held in their *synagogues*. Mat. x. 17; Acts xxii. 19. And they imagine it is probable, that when they were converted to Christianity, they preserved the same custom; and that the *partiality* here blamed, related to two persons, who had causes to try, when the visible superiority given to one, in the setting him in a more honourable place than the other, would tend to pervert justice in his favour; and which Maimonides says the Jewish precepts particularly forbid. But the representing both the parties as *seated*, does not suit this *interpretation*. It is urged that some *civil distinctions* might reasonably be made, and it must be allowed; but the *apostle* probably saw it rising *too high*; and in times of persecution, when poor people ventured their lives in behalf of Christianity, they had some peculiar title to honourable regard.

c *With a gold ring*: χρυσοδακτυλιος.] Perhaps this compound word might have been rendered, *Having his fingers adorned with gold rings*. The learned Albert has observed, that those who valued themselves upon the richness and luxury of their dress, were accustomed to deck their fingers with a considerable number of costly and valuable rings, frequently wearing several upon one finger. *Observ. Philolog. in loc.*

d *And*

SECT. iii.

James II. 2.

man in mean and *sordid raiment*; you are apt to show an undue regard to the former, and to put a visible slight on the latter, at his first appearance, without considering what may be the real character of the one or the other. *And* whatever may be said in excuse for this, it is often blame-worthy; for if *ye have a respect*, as ye naturally have, *for him who wears a splendid dress, and say to him, Sit there in an honourable place; and say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool*; *And distinguish not in yourselves*[d] according to the different characters of these two men, but only regard their outward appearance, *you even become judges, who reason ill*[e]; you seem by such conduct to determine, that external circumstances are chiefly to be considered; which certainly is wrong, and if it were to be pursued, would produce very iniquitous and unjustifiable sentiments and practices. By such a conduct as this, you court the favour of the rich, and strongly intimate your contempt of the poor, as poor; but *hearken, my beloved brethren*, and consider, for it is peculiarly worthy of your most attentive regard; *Hath not God* apparently *chosen* many, who are among *the poor of this world*, [*to be*] *rich in faith*[f]; *and* does it not appear that they are so? Are they not *heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him*; and just upon the point of being carried to a glory, that will eclipse that of the greatest monarchs on earth? And does it become you, believing this, to despise those who for any thing you know, may in a few days be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and placed in the most distinguished rank among the guests at the celestial banquet? *But* this indeed is the case; *you have* often *dishonoured the poor man*, though God may have condescended to visit him with such a gracious regard, and have enriched him with such inestimable mercies. On the other hand, *do not the rich* whom you court with so much respect and assiduity, *tyrannize over you*

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and

3 4 5 6

d *And distinguish not in yourselves*: και ου διεκριθητε εν εαυτοις.] This I take to be the exact rendering of this clause, as the verb is of the middle signification, and that it should not be read as in our English version, with an interrogation.

e *Judges, who reason ill.*] Our English version in this place is literal, but at the same time very obscure and ambiguous. Beza's observation is a just one, that the phrase in the original is an Hebraism, and it is accordingly rendered by him, *Judices male ratiocinantes, Judges who reason ill.*

f *To be rich in faith.*] The *ellipsis* in these words of εις το ειναι or γινεσθαι, is common; as Bos, and after him, Albert, hath observed. Accordingly I have rendered it, *to be rich in faith.*

SECT. iii.

you, and drag you to their tribunals? Are not most of the rich your persecutors, rather than your friends; *Do they not blaspheme the honourable name* of our Lord Jesus Christ, *by which you are called?* And do they not often compel you to blaspheme it, and inflict the severest penalties upon you, if you refuse? So that on the whole, they often prove themselves the vilest of men. And can you think, that when this is the case, and you see so many poor saints courageously enduring these extremities, that you ought to fix your eyes so much on a glaring outside, and overlook that heroic worth which so often appears under a veil of poverty? I beseech you, learn to think more reasonably at all times, and especially to bring better sentiments into your assemblies for public worship. And not only in such instances, *but* in all others, endeavour to act equitably; for *if you fulfil the* noble and *royal law*, which *according to* that expression of *the scripture*, ought with a kind of imperial authority to govern all our sentiments; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; ye do well:* that would be in every thing a rule to you, and particularly here; for none of you if you were reduced to poverty, would wish to be treated with marks of slight and contempt on that account, without any regard to your character in other respects. *But if ye* do in this partial manner, *accept* the *persons* of men, *ye work iniquity* therein, *being convicted by the law*, I have just now mentioned, *as transgressors* of it. And give me leave to say, that whatever zeal you may shew for any other precepts, if convicted here, you become guilty before God, and forfeit your acceptance with him. *For whoever shall keep the whole law* in every other instance, *but* allow himself to *offend in one* [*particular*] *he is* in effect *guilty of all;* as he that committed but one capital crime, would as surely suffer death, as if he had committed all that ever were prohibited in that light. *For* it is certain, that he disregards the authority of the Lawgiver, which has established every precept equally; as it is evident, *he that says, Thou shalt not commit adultery, hath also said, Thou shalt do no murder. If therefore thou art not an adulterer, but committest murder, thou art* evidently *a transgressor of the law.* Hence it appears, that it is not by a regard to the Divine authority

James II. 7.

and draw you before the judgment seats?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

ty

ty that thou abstainest from the former crime, since that would equally have preserved thee from the latter. Let it therefore be your care, that ye *so speak and so act as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty*, by the glorious gospel, which is a dispensation that sets us at liberty from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and directs us to all the branches of that virtue and holiness, which is the truest liberty of the mind, and which being so excellent, must subject us to severer punishment if we presume to contemn it. And especially remember to maintain a regard to it, where the rules of charity are concerned. *For* you know a particular stress is laid upon this branch, as of the highest moment in the sight of God; as we are warned by our compassionate Lord himself, that on the one hand, *he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath not exercised mercy; and* on the other hand, *mercy rejoices against judgment*, and emboldens our hopes, when we stand before that merciful Being, whom we have resembled in that amiable part of his character.

James II. 12.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

13

IMPROVEMENT.

THE *apostle* could not intend to condemn those *civil distinctions* which are founded upon the different relations and circumstances of mankind in the present world; but surely God intended to teach us, how *little* esteem he sets upon *riches*, by bestowing them on many of the most *undeserving* of mankind, while he withholds them from his *dearest children;* and to *admire* them, and others, on account of their *riches*, while we pour *contempt* on the *poor*, as poor, though so many of them are distinguished by the riches of the Divine favour, must be highly *unreasonable*, and to God highly offensive. As for those who are *poor in this world*, but *rich in faith*, let them adore the Divine munificence to them, and think with pleasure of those *durable riches*, and of that everlasting *kingdom*, which God has *prepared for them* as their *inheritance.* Ver. 4 5

Whatever our stations be, let us pray that the *royal law* may be inscribed upon our hearts, and that we may *love our neighbours as ourselves;* guarding against that mean and prohibited *respect of persons*, which would expose us to *conviction*, as *transgressors of the law.* Let us also learn to guard against that *partiality* in our obedience to it, which is utterly inconsistent with *sincerity.* Let us remember, 8 9 10

SECT. iii.

member, that the Divine authority *equally* establishes *every* precept of it, and that the *generous* nature of the *gospel*-dispensation, as a
11 *law of liberty*, will be a sad aggravation of our presumptuous violation of it. A consciousness of those many defects and imperfec-
12 tions, which the *best* of men may see reason to charge themselves with, should certainly engage our most earnest applications to God
13 for *mercy*; and as we desire to obtain it, let it be our care to *exercise mercy* to others, both in the *candour* of our censures on the one hand, and the readiness of our *liberality* on the other.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle largely descants on the inefficacy of a mere historical faith; and evinces, by most striking instances and illustrations, the utter insufficiency of it for our justification and eternal salvation. James II. 14, *to the end.*

JAMES II. 14.

SECT. iv.

IT is with real grief that I perceive many of you seem highly to value yourselves upon the James II. 14. profession you make of the Christian religion, without being suitably impressed with a practical sense of its important principles, and influenced to a life agreeable to them. But *what advantage* [*is there*] *my brethren, if any one say, he has faith, but has not* suitable *works*[a], to support the justice of that pretension? *Can* such a *faith*, as may be separated from good
15 works *save him?* Consider the case, when men make professions of charity, without producing the proper fruits of it, and you will easily see how vain such a pretension is. *If*, for instance, *a*

JAMES II. 14.

WHAT *doth it* profit my brethren though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food.

a *If any one say he has faith, but has not* suitable *works.*] I am surprised at the immense pains *commentators* have taken, to reconcile St. Paul and St. James; and the many *hypotheses* they have formed for that purpose. Whereas to me nothing is more evident, than that the *ideas* they affix to the words, *faith*, and *works*, are entirely different. St. James, by the word *faith*, means simply an *assent* to the truth of religious principles, *without determining whether it be, or be not, effectual;* and then declares, that in case this assent does not produce *good works*, that is, the solid virtues of the heart and life, it cannot be accepted by God. Whereas St. Paul by the word *faith* means a cordial and *vital assent* to Divine truth, which *influences* the heart to a *holy* temper, and according to the gracious terms of the gospel, entitles a man to Divine acceptance, without any regard at all to the *Mosaic law*, and previous to the production of any of those *good works* which will naturally be the fruit of it. Had Luther calmly considered this, he would not have denied the *inspiration* of St. James, out of regard to his supposed *heterodoxy* in the business of *justification;* nor would one of his followers have presumed to charge him expressly with *lying*, as *Limborch* tells us he did, *Mentitus est Jacobus in caput suum. Limborch. Theol.* 1. iii. 16.

SECT. iv.

a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of dai-
16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and filled; notwithstanding, ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?
ly food for the subsistence of life, *And one of you*, who calls himself a Christian, *say to them*, We heartily pity your case, and feel the tender emotions of that love which our relation to each other requires; *depart* therefore *in peace*, whithersoever the Providence of God may lead you, and I sincerely wish that you may meet with suitable accommodations: may ye *be* clothed and sheltered, *warmed, and fed to the full; but* with all these soft addresses, if *ye give not to them* either food, or raiment, or any money to purchase *the things necessary for the body; what* [*does it*] *profit* them to be addressed with such hypocritical professions of love? Yea, does it not rather seem a cruel mockery, than a real kindness? James II. 16.

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone.
So also faith, how zealously soever it may be professed, and how orthodox soever those articles are, to which an assent is given, *if it have not* suitable *works* to attend it, *being by itself, is dead* [b] and producing no substantial fruit, is altogether insignificant. 17

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.
But one better instructed in Christianity, *may* perhaps *say* to one of these forward professors, in order to bring matters to a short issue, Thou sayest that *thou hast faith, and* I make it appear in my life and conversation, that *I have works*, which naturally spring from that principle; give me then the evidence I offer thee; *shew me thy faith by thy works* [c] *and I will* also in return *shew thee my faith by my works*; let us without quarrelling about different explications of faith, make it manifest to each other, that our profession is truly solid, by its substantial effects upon our tempers and lives. 18

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils
Thou assuredly *believest that there is one* only true and living *God*, and therein *thou doest well*: it is the grand fundamental principle of all true religion. 19

But

b *Faith, if it have not works*, &c.] From this passage it appears, that we should not *confine* the idea of the word *faith*, as used by St. James, to a mere assent; for it would be an absurd supposition, that a *mere* assent *should* have any works. By this word therefore St. James, (as we observed in the former note,) means simply an *assent, whether it be or be not effectual.* Nor is it indeed the assent that saves when accompanied with *works.* So that the *apostle's* assertion is more *critically* and *correctly* true, than many of his commentators have apprehended.

c *Shew me thy faith*, &c.] This version is so very different from our own, that many of my English readers will be much surprised at it.—But I have followed the most and best copies, which read it, as in the margin of our bibles, εκ των εργων σε —and—εκ των εργων μου, though some *copies* read the first *clause*, χωρις των εργων σου, which our *translators* have followed.

d *The*

SECT. iv.

But remember, it is a principle common to those who are entirely destitute of religion; for *the devils also* firmly *believe* it, and cannot with-hold their assent; they are persuaded by dreadful experience of his existence, *and* of the terrors of his wrath, so as even to *tremble* in the expectation of that full display of it, to which they know they are inevitably doomed.

James II. 19.

devils also believe and tremble.

20 *But wilt thou know, O vain* empty *man*, who restest in that which might be found in equal, or in higher degrees, in the infernal spirits, *that faith without works*, a persuasion of the truths of Christianity, if it produces no solid fruits of holiness, *is* really *dead* as to any valuable purpose that can be expected from it.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Take an instance of this in the most celebrated of all the patriarchs; I mean, the instance of *Abraham*, *our* great and illustrious *father; was he not* plainly *justified by works, when*, in consequence of that full persuasion he had of a Divine commission and command to do it, *he offered his son Isaac upon the altar*, intending, in obedience to what he apprehended the will of God, actually to have slain him, and to have trusted in God to accomplish the promise of a numerous seed to descend from him, by raising

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22 him from the dead. *Thou seest* then in this instance, *that faith co-operated with his works*, and animated him to zeal and self-denial in them; *and faith was perfected by works;* the integrity of it was made fully apparent to himself, to angels, and to God. *And* thus *the*

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23 *scripture was fulfilled, which says*, (Gen. xv. 6,) referring to what passed long before this, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*[d]; and in consequence of this he was treated by God with such peculiar endearment, that *he was even called the Friend of God;* as it is said, (Isa xli. 8.) the seed of Abraham my friend. This proved the sincerity of his faith, and that he was in some degree worthy

23 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God.

24 the honour of the Divine friendship. *You see then* by this instance of the great father of the faithful, if the characters of the children are to be

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is

d *The scripture was fulfilled*, &c.] This very text St. Paul quotes Rom. iv. 3; to prove *that Abraham was justified by faith*; which plainly shews, that the *faith* by which St. Paul says he was *justified*, was such a faith as includes *good works* in it, as a certain *principle* of them; and consequently, establishes what was said above for reconciling these two apostles in the easiest manner.

is justified, and not by faith only.

be estimated in the same manner as those of the father, *that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only:* it is by no means enough, that the great principles of religion be credited, if they have not also their practical influence on the heart and life. SECT. iv. James II. 24.

25 Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

In like manner also, I might illustrate the matter by the further instance of *Rahab*, who had been *the harlot*, though afterwards reclaimed by Divine grace: *was she not justified by works, when* in consequence of that faith which she professed in the God of Israel, *she received*, entertained, and sheltered *the spies*, who came to observe the state of Jericho, *and* at the apparent hazard of her life, concealed them from those that came to search after them; till at length, knowing which way the pursuers would go, she *sent them out another way*, and so made effectual provision for their escape. 25

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

And on such principles must all others expect justification and salvation; *for as the body, without the spirit, is* but a *dead* carcase, how fair and entire soever it may appear, and will at length fall into putefraction and dissolution; *so* such a *faith* as remains, *without* the substantial fruits of good *works*, which ought ever to attend it, *is also dead:* it now appears as a carcase in the sight of God, and as such will ere long perish. 26

IMPROVEMENT.

LET this great and important lesson, which the *apostle* here teaches so plainly, and inculcates so largely, be never forgotten. It is true indeed, (as *St. Paul* elsewhere fully proves,) that we *are justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law.* The works of the *Mosaic law* are by no means necessary; and it is not by our obedience to *any law*, but by embracing and resting upon the *mercy of God in Christ*, for our *salvation*, that we obtain it. Nevertheless, it is vain to pretend to such a *faith, if good works* are not produced by it; and we might as soon expect the guardianship and counsel, the offices and consolations of friendship, from a *dead corpse*, as happiness from a *mere assent*, even to the most important doctrines. Let us therefore endeavour to *shew our faith by our works.* Let us be ready, with *Abraham, to offer up* our dearest comforts to God. Let us, with *Rahab*, be willing even to *expose our lives* in the defence of God's *people*, and his Ver. 24, &c. 26 18 21

SECT. iv.

cause otherwise our *faith* being of no better a kind than that of *the devils*, will leave us the companions of their misery and despair; even though the conviction should now be so powerful as to make us *tremble*; or a false persuasion of our enjoying privileges
Ver. 19 to which we are utter strangers, should give as strong an emotion to any of the softer passions.

15, 16 Let faith then be *active and influential. Let love be without dissimulation.* Let us not love *merely in word, but in deed*, and charge it upon our consciences to be ready to authenticate by the most *substantial* offices of humanity, the profession we at any time make *of friendly wishes, or kind intentions.* Otherwise, such professions will be worse than *unprofitable*, as, by encouraging only a false dependence and expectation, they will make the disappointment proportionably *grievous and afflictive*, to those whom we hypocritically, or lightly pretended to *compassionate or succour.*

SECT. V.

The Apostle cautions them against being too forward in assuming the office and character of teachers; and recommends a strict government of the tongue, as a matter, though of great difficulty, yet of the highest importance. James III. 1—12.

JAMES III. 1.

SECT. v.

AND now, *my brethren*, give me leave to caution you against another evil which I have seen some reason to apprehend, and to press
James III. 1. you, that ye *be not many teachers*[a]; that none of you rashly undertake the office of teachers, which many are ready to intrude themselves into, without due qualifications, or a regular call: but I would urge you to be cautious against such an assuming disposition, *as knowing that* we who bear that office, must expect that *we shall undergo greater* and stricter *judgment* than others in
2 a more private station of life. The many infirmities to which the best of us are subject, may indeed teach us to think with awe of that exact

JAMES III. 1.

MY brethren, be not many masters knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in

a *Not many teachers.*] Our translators render it *masters*, as διδασκαλος is frequently rendered; and it is generally explained of *imperious* and *censorious dictators*, as many of the Jewish zealots were. But when he forbids many to be such, he seems to allow that some may; and consequently I think *teachers* ought to be explained in an innocent and indifferent sense, as in the *paraphrase.* And though the word κριμα, in the following clause, may usually signify *condemnation*, yet sometimes it means *judgment* in the general: particularly Mat. vii. 2; Acts xxiv. 25; Rom. v. 16; (where it is evidently distinguished from κατακριμα,) 1 Cor. vi. 7; Heb. vi. 2; Rev. xx. 4; as on the other hand, κρισις, which generally signifies *judgment* alone, sometimes includes *condemnation* in it. Mat. xxiii. 33; Mark iii. 29; Heb. x. 27.

b *All*

James III. 2.

in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

exact trial we are then to undergo : *for in many things we all offend* [b]; we are too ready to trip and stumble in our walk. And it is peculiarly worthy our attention here, that *if any one offend not in word*, [*he is*] *a perfect man* [c], arrived at so high a pitch and improvement in virtue, that it may be concluded, that he is *able also to bridle in the whole body ;* as it is frequently much more difficult to govern our tongues in a becoming manner, than to avoid enormities in our actions.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold, we put bridles into the mouths of horses, that they may obey us, according to their direction ; *and* strong, and sometimes furious, as those creatures are, *we turn* them hither and thither, so as to influence the motion of *their whole body.*

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

Behold also how the ships, though they be many of them *so large, and* sometimes *agitated by violent winds, are turned by a very small helm, whithersoever the steersman pleaseth* [d], and the waving of his hand determines their direction.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

So also the tongue, though it *is but a little member, yet boasteth great things,* pretends, and that not unjustly, to have a great deal of influence upon the world. *Behold,* and observe, *how great a quantity of materials a little fire kindleth* into a blaze.

6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity ; so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of

And thus *the tongue* [*is*] *a fire,* which often produces a great conflagration : it is *a* little *world of iniquity* [e] of itself. *The tongue is so set among our members,* holds such a rank and place, [*that*] indeed *it defiles the whole body, and inflames the* whole course and *circle of nature* [f], *and is* itself also

b *All offend.*] The word πταιομεν, properly speaking, signifies, *we trip ;* and Dr. *Barrow* (see *his Works,* Vol. I. p. 129,) has justly observed, that as the general course of life is called, *a way,* and particular actions, *steps ;* so going on in a regular course of right action, is *walking* uprightly; and acting amiss, *tripping* or *stumbling.*

c *Perfect man.*] It is certain a man whose *words* are *inoffensive,* may possibly have some *imperfections ;* it shows therefore in how *limited* a sense the word *perfect* is to be taken; and the observation may be applied to many other passages,

d *Whithersoever the steersman pleaseth.*] As the word is, ευθυνοντος, which signifies any person that sits at the *helm,* and not necessarily the *pilot,* who is called by way of eminence, ο κυβερνητης, I thought it best to render it *steersman ;* though I confess the remark and distinction to be a matter of small importance. I know not how well to express in English the force of ορμη του ευθυνοντος, which admirably represents the *impetuosity* with which, in a storm, a man at the *helm* on a *critical* occasion *turns his hand.* See Dr. *Owen on the Spirit,* p. 57.

e *A world of iniquity :* ο κοσμος της αδικιας.] *Elsner, (Observ. Sacr. in loc.)* gives a very singular translation of this clause, *The tongue is the adorning of unrighteousness ;* referring to those specious colourings by which wicked men endeavour to excuse or conceal their criminal conduct.

f *Circle of nature.*] So I thought τροχον might be rendered, which most exactly signifies a *wheel* from the *revolutions* formed. And perhaps it may intimate, how the *mischief* done by the tongue often *comes round about.* A consideration, which, were it not intimated by the expression, is well

SECT V.

James III. 6.

also *set on fire by hell;* the infernal spirit influences the heart, and its wickedness overflows by the tongue, and tends indeed, by its fatal consequences, to produce a very hell upon earth.

of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 It is observable, that *every species of wild beasts, and birds, of reptiles and fishes,* though some of them take shelter in inaccessible desarts, and others bury themselves in the earth; though some mount the air, and others have their abode deep in the watery element; yet still every sort *is subdued*[g], *and has* in some instances or other *been subdued, by men;* and many, whose natures are fiercest, are so tamed as to do the hu-

7 For every kind of beasts and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8 man species no harm. *But the tongue no man can* entirely *subdue,* neither the tongues of others, nor his own, so that it shall not in some instances be hurtful; for [*it is*] *an insuperable evil,* and like a serpent, or an adder, *full of mortal venom,* by which sometimes death, and

8 But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 even damnation itself is occasioned. *By it we* sometimes *bless God, even the Father;* and it is our glory, when we make use of it in that sacred and honourable employment; and yet sometimes this noble instrument is degraded to the vilest purposes, *and by it we curse* and revile *men,* our brethren, *who are made after the like-*

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 *ness of God,* and honoured with his image. *Out of the same mouth proceedeth the blessing and the curse,* and the same tongue is the instrument of expressing both: and too frequently when the act of devotion is over, the act of slander, or outrage and insult commences. Alas! *my brethren, these things ought not so to be:* it is a shame to human nature, and it is surely a much

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 fouler reproach to a Christian profession. *Does a fountain from the same opening send forth* alternately, and at different times, *sweet* [*water*] *and bitter?* It is not known in the natural, and it ought not to be known in the moral world.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?

12 *Can a fig-tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine, figs?* No, but every tree has its own proper

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-

well worthy the attention of every *wise man.* Elsner, Albert, and Bos, by this phrase understand *successive generations* of men; as if the apostle had said, The tongue inflamed our *forefathers,* it hath the same bad influence on *us,* and is likely to have on our *posterity.*

g *Is subdued.*] So I chuse to render δαμαζεται, rather than *tamed,* that it may include the *conquering* great and mighty *fishes* of the sea, such as *sharks* and *whales;* of which it seems less proper to say they are *tamed,* as that generally imports a kind of *harmless familiarity* to which some savage beasts are indeed brought; but of which *large fishes* are in their nature *incapable;* and it may be questioned whether some other animals are not so likewise; and such it was most to the *apostle's* purpose to mention.

olive-berries? or a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt-water and fresh.

proper productions. *So no fountain produces brackish water and sweet.* In like manner there ought to be a great deal of care, that we maintain a consistency in our discourses, and that if we profess religion and devotion, we speak at all times, as those who are often employing our speech to these noble purposes. So shall we honour God, and promote the peace of society, and of our own minds; whereas otherwise, we shall injure both; yea, and injure others, and ourselves the more, in consequence of the profession which we make of religion.

SECT. V.

James III. 12.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET this *pathetic* discourse of the *apostle* concerning the difficulty and importance of *governing our tongues aright*, engage us to the strictest care on this great *article* of practical religion, of which so many are *careless*, in which the most are so far *deficient*, as to entitle those to the character of *perfect men*, who do not here *offend*. Let us intreat the assistance of Divine grace, that we may *keep our mouths as with a bridle;* Psal. xxxix. 1:) that we may *steer* this important *helm* aright, lest by the mismanagement of it, we *shipwreck* even our eternal hopes. Let us be cautious of every *spark*, where there are so many *combustible* materials; and take heed, lest we, and others, be *defiled*, and *infernal flames kindled* and propagated. It is indeed a *difficult*, but in consequence of this a *glorious* toil, far more glorious than to *subdue* the *fiercest animals*, or the haughtiest enemies: let us therefore resolutely make the attempt, and learn to employ our tongues, as indeed *the glory of our frame*, to *bless God even the Father.* And let the remembrance of that *similitude of God*, in which *men are formed*, make us tender of all their interests; and especially careful, that we do not injure them by unkind reproaches, or detracting speeches; and so much the rather, that we may maintain a *consistency* between the words of *devotion* addressed to God, and those of *converse* with our fellow-creatures. So shall the *well-spring of wisdom*, rising up in our hearts, and streaming forth from our lips, be as a *flowing brook*. Let those, who are by Providence called to be *teachers* of others, set a *double guard* upon their words, not only in *public*, but in *private* too, as peculiar notice will be taken of them; and the honour of religion, one way or another, be greatly affected by the tenour of their discourses. And let the awful *account* which such are to give, the *greater judgment* they are to expect, prevent any from *intruding* them-

Ver. 2 6 7 9 11 1

SECT. V. themselves into such an *office*, without suitable qualifications, and a regular call. May God enable them to judge rightly concern-
Ver. ing *that call;* and where it is indeed given, may his grace furnish
2 them for their work, and his mercy cover those *many imperfections*, which the best will see room to acknowledge and lament.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle urges a candid benevolent disposition, guarding them against censoriousness and animosities, and that love of the world which tends to excite them; to restrain which he recommends an humble application to God for Divine influences. James III. 13.—IV. 10.

SECT. VI. James III. 13.

MANKIND are naturally desirous of the reputation of an understanding superior to others: consider what is the best display of it. *Who* [*is*] *wise, and a man of sense among you? let him shew* himself to be possest of the most valuable kind of knowledge, by exhibiting *out of a good*, holy, and useful *conversation, his* honourable and beneficent *works*. And let him do this, not with vain ostentation or rigorous zeal, but *with the meekness* and gentleness *of* true
14 *wisdom*. *But if ye have bitter zeal* against each other, *and* uncharitable *contention in your hearts, boast not* of your improvements in Christianity, *and lie not against the truth* by such groundless
15 pretensions. *This is not the wisdom that cometh down from above*, and which that religion that our Divine Master brought from heaven teaches us; *but* it [*is*] on the contrary, *earthly, sensual*, and even *diabolical*[a]. It takes its rise from considerations relating to the present world, objects which gratify only our senses, the inferior part of our nature, and which are the baits of the devil's temptations, by which he endeavours to dishonour our profession, and ruin our souls.
16 *For* it is evident in fact, that *where* uncharitable *zeal and contention* [*is*,] [*there is*] wild *confusion* and disorder *and every* other *evil* and per-

James III. 13. WHO *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying, and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and strife *is*, there

a *Earthly, sensual, diabolical.*] Dr. *Bates* supposes this refers to the *three* grand *temptations* of the world, *avarice*, a love of *pleasure*, and *ambition*; the first of which is *earthly*, the second *sensual*, the third *diabolical*, being the sin by which the *devils* fell. *Bate's Works*, p. 339.

b *The*

there *is* confusion, and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

pernicious *work;* all the turbulent passions are in exercise, and a thousand irregular and fatal effects are produced. *But the wisdom* [*which is*] *from above*, of celestial original, *is first pure* from all unclean and corrupt mixtures, and agreeable to the tenor of Divine and evangelical truth; *then* in consequence of that, *peaceable* and pacific, desirous to make and maintain peace; moderate and *gentle, easily to be intreated*, persuaded and reconciled, where any matters of disgust may have arisen; *full of mercy, and good fruits*, compassionate to the afflicted, beneficent to all; *without partiality* to those of our own sentiments and denomination, to the injury of others; *and without hypocrisy*, meaning all the kindness it expresses, and glad to extend its good offices as universally as possible. *And* thus the good man recommends and adorns religion, and in this he finds his own truest account; for whereas the wrath of man, as I observed, worketh not the righteousness of God; *the* blessed *fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those that make peace* [b]; persons of such a spirit promote the spread of the gospel, that great root of righteousness; and while a harvest of goodness by this means springs up in the minds of others, they shall themselves in due time reap joy and blessing in the comforts of the present life, and in the fruits of a glorious immortality.

SECT. vi.

James IV. 17.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

18

IV. 1. From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of

On the other hand, when we come to consider the effects of a contrary disposition, how melancholy and how dreadful are they! *Whence* [*are*] *wars and fightings among you* [c]? Whence all the shocking scenes, which private quarrels, and

IV. 1.

b *The fruit of righteousness.*] Possibly it might have been rendered, *The fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace.* As it had been said, they who shew a *peaceful* temper, (supposing it to proceed from right principles,) may assure themselves, that they shall *reap* a harvest, in a world where righteousness flourishes in eternal peace. A seed is sown, and it will spring up, and make them ample amends for all the injuries they have sustained in a contentious world.

c *Wars and fightings.*] The contentious spirit of the Jews was very apparent, and drew on them speedy destruction; as many *writers* have justly observed on this text. Plato says, 'Nothing but the body, and its lusts and appetites, kindle sedition, quarrels, and wars in the world. But Mr. Blackwall observes, that the sentiment is here expressed with *greater* vivacity; and another beautiful metaphor is added, *Your lusts which war in your members;* intimating, that there is a state of civil war in the soul, either between sensual inclinations and conscience: or between one lust and another. *Blackwall's Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 212.

d *Ye*

SECT. VI.

James IV. 1.

and public wars occasion; even all the carnage of a field of slaughter, and the barbarous attempts which human creatures and brethren make to destroy one another? [*Is it*] *not hence from your* sensual *lusts* and appetites, *which* first *war in your members;* that is, do first as it were give battle to your rational powers, and then turn the several members of your bodies into

2 weapons of mischief and destruction? *Ye covet* this and that pleasure and gratification, *and* in your present circumstances, ye find that ye *have not* [d] the means of procuring it; and therefore *ye* are ready to *kill* [e] one another, because you stand in each others way, *and* one possesses what another would be glad to possess, even though it were at the expence of the owner's life. Because *ye* thus *earnestly desire* for yourselves, *and* envy each other the possession of what ye *cannot obtain*, *ye* quarrel and *fight*, make one injury beget another, till *ye* come to *wage* a confirmed *war* with each other. *Yet* after all, ye miss the surest way of obtaining the most desirable blessings, which would be earnestly to seek them of God in prayer; but this is omitted, and so *ye have not* the blessings ye might otherwise easily obtain, *because you*

3 *ask not.* Or if you do pray, it is with little devotion, and so to little purpose; *ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss*, without a becoming faith and fervency, or without that regard to the glory of God, which ought to animate all your desires. Whereas ye seek these things only, *that ye may squander away them upon your lusts*, and indulge yourselves in the height of luxurious pleasure, while your poor brethren are in the last necessity; and surely the dearer any man is to God, the less likely will he be to succeed in such petitions as these. Ye

of your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

d *Ye covet and have not.*] Dr. Whitby explains this particularly of the Jews. They *lusted* after two things, *freedom* from tribute, and *dominion* over neighbouring nations; and they continually *prayed* for these, without considering whether they were indeed *agreeable* to the will of God; and aiming at nothing more than the gratification of their sensual desires in them. But the apostle seems to imply, they *would have had* the desirable things here referred to, if they had asked aright; and I think, that a good reason for the more *extensive* sense, which, according to my usual manner, I have given to the words.

e *Ye kill.*] Beza, and Erasmus Schmidius, would read it φθονειτε, *ye envy*, though without the authority of a single manuscript. But slaughter is agreeable enough to what was said above of *wars and fightings*, and to the contentious and *sanguinary* temper of the Jews.

f *Is*

SECT. VI.

James IV. 4.

4 Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, for I cannot give you a milder name, while guilty of this spiritual whoredom, while you are lavishing away your best affections upon objects so far beneath him to whom you have vowed them, *know ye not that the friendship of the world*, which you so much court and caress, *is enmity against God? Whoever therefore will be a friend to the world*, and resolves to pursue it as his chief good, *is* by a necessary consequence declared and *adjudged to be an enemy* [f] *of God*, as he will be led into that rebellion against his law, which makes up the grand character of that enmity.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

Do you think the scripture speaks in vain in all the passages in which it guards us against such a temper as this, and leads the mind directly to God, as the supreme good; teaching us to abandon every thing for him? Or *does the* Holy *Spirit that dwells in us* Christians, *lust to envy* [g]? does it encourage these worldly affections, this strife and envying which we have reproved? or can it be imagined, that we who appear to have so much of the Spirit, have any interested views in the cautions we give, and would persuade you from the pursuit of the world, because we should envy you the enjoyment of it? No; *But* we rather pity such fond and wretched attachments; for *he gives* us *greater* degrees of *grace*, than to leave us the slaves of so wretched a disposition; *as it is said* in those ever memorable words, (Prov. iii. 34,) *God sets himself in battle-array against the proud but to the lowly he giveth grace* and favour.

6 But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble,

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Subject yourselves therefore to God; and being listed in his army, keep the rank [h] which he has assigned you; *resist the devil* steadily and courageously, as the great enemy of your eternal salvation; *and* though he may for a while combat you with his varied temptations, *he will* at length *flee from you*, and your progress in religion

[f] *Is adjudged to be an enemy.*] So Dr. Barrow, (see his Works, Vol. I. p. 228,) justly observes, that the word καθίσταται signifies; and there is a considerable emphasis in the expression: it is now declared and adjudged beyond controversy, that he is an *enemy of God*

[g] *Does the Spirit—lust,* &c.] This rendering, (with Dr. Whitby,) I prefer to our own, which intimates the latter clause to be a *quotation.* Bishop Patrick supposes it is borrowed from Numb. xi. 29. But I think it would be doing great violence to that *text*, to suppose this an intended *quotation* from thence.

[h] Keep the rank.] So the expression ὑπόταγήτε properly and exactly signifies.

SECT. VI.

ligion, and your victory over your spiritual adversaries, will grow daily more easy. *Draw near to God* with humble submission and earnest prayer, *and he will draw near to you* with mercy. *Cleanse* [*your*] *hands, O ye sinners,* from all the pollutions with which they are stained; *and* rest not merely in a freedom from evil actions, but labour to *purify* [*your*] *hearts* as much as possible, from all irregularities of affection. *O ye doubled minded,* who continue thus wavering between God and the world, and have as yet learned to exert so little resolution in religion, that it is matter of doubt, whether you have any principles of it at all. And when you reflect upon the former part of life, so unprofitably and so unworthily spent, *lament* the guilt of such a conduct; *and mourn and weep* for the miseries which you have exposed yourselves to by it. And instead of these vain indulgencies, *let your laughter be turned into mourning, and* [*your*] ill-timed *joy, into* expressions of the deepest *sorrow.* On the whole, *humble yourselves* in the very dust *before the Lord,* whom by your sins you have offended; *and* you may hope *he will* return to you in the methods of his mercy, and *raise you up* again from that prostrate condition.

James IV. 8. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, ye sinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double-minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iii. 15. If we desire the character of *wisdom,* let us learn from the oracles of eternal truth, how it is to be obtained—by *meekness* and *a good conversation.* Let us avoid that *infernal wisdom,* here so severely and justly branded, which consists in knowing the most effectual methods to distress others. On the contrary, let us pray, and study, and labour for that *which is from above,* and of which so amiable a character is here given. And so far as it can be obtained without injuring conscience, let us cultivate universal *peace;* and let a *gentle* and placable temper, an *impartial* and *sincere* disposition, be ever inviolably preserved, even when we are obliged to *contend* with others, about matters of the highest importance; remembering that the more *sacred* the cause is, the more solicitous we should be that we do not injure it by a passionate or iniquitous management of it. Thus let us *sow the fruits of righteousness in peace,* and wait the promised *harvest;* leaving

wars

wars and contentions to others, lamenting them, and praying that God would cause them entirely to cease. And that we may be less obnoxious to those temptations, whereby others are betrayed into them, let us endeavour to guard against those *lusts* and *passions* which give a disproportionate value to the *objects* about which those *contentions* arise. Does God brand them with this character of *adultery?* Let us preserve our souls pure from such affections, as ever we desire that our *prayers* should be *acceptable* to God. May his grace subdue all the workings of *pride*, of *luxury*, and of *envy;* and produce in our hearts more and more of that *humility*, to which he will give *more grace;* engaging us, when thus invited, to *draw near to him*, to ask aright what we need from him, trusting his promise that he will *draw nigh to us*, and that when we *humble ourselves before him, he will raise us up. Cleansing our hands*, let us endeavour to *purify our hearts* too. So may those who have hitherto been *double minded*, hope to attain an *establishment* in religion, in conjunction with that *established peace*, which no *carnal* affection, even when most fully gratified, can either afford or admit.

SECT. vi. Chap. iv. 1. 2 4 3 6 8

SECT. VII.

The Apostle suggests particular cautions against evil-speaking, and vain confidence in the events of futurity, or in any worldly possessions which often prove a temptation to luxury, and an occasion of ruin; and concludes the section with encouraging and exhorting afflicted and oppressed Christians to wait patiently for the coming of their Lord. James IV. 11.—V. 8.

James IV. 11.

SPEAK not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth *his* brother speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

James IV. 11.

SECT. vii.

LET me now charge you, my *brethren*, that ye *speak not evil of one another;* for *he that speaketh evil of* [*his*] *brother, and judgeth* [*his*] *brother* with a rash severity, therein *speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law;* condemning it as if it were an erroneous rule, in so expressly forbidding such a conduct[a]. *But if thou* thus *judgest the law*, and passest, as it were, a condemning sentence upon it, *thou art* then *not a doer of the law, but a judge.* And how the arrogance of setting up such a superiority to the

James IV. 11.

[a] *Speaketh evil of* [*his*] *brother*, &c.] Dr. Whitby explains this of the unbelieving Jews reproaching their *Christian brethren* for their non-observation of the Mosaic law; and thinks, the *apostle* intimates, that as the *ceremonial* law was not originally intended for the Gentiles, this conduct was a reflection upon the *wisdom of God* in giving it. But I chuse the more *extensive* explication.

SECT. vii.

the great Governor of the universe will pass, when it comes under his final review, it well becomes you seriously to consider. For it is
James IV. 12. certain, *there is one* great Almighty *Law-giver who is able* abundantly *to* assert the honour of his own government; and as he can *save* his faithful *and* obedient subjects from the greatest extremity of danger and calamity, so he is also able *to destroy* the most obstinate and audacious rebel, and to smite him with irrecoverable ruin in the full career of his crimes. *Who art thou* therefore *that judgest another?* and darest to invade the office of this supreme and universal Law-giver, and thereby exposest thyself to his condemnation?

12 There is one Law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

13 But to insist no further upon this; let me now turn myself to those who are quite immersed in their worldly schemes, and promise themselves assuredly an opportunity to accomplish them. *Come now, ye that say, To day, or To-morrow, we will go to such a city, and spend a year there, and traffic, and get gain* by our merchandize, and then return and enjoy the fruits of our la-
14 bours. Alas! upon what an uncertainty do you proceed in such a supposition as this! *whereas*, instead of being able to count on a year to come, *ye know not* even *what* [*shall be*] *on the morrow*, and much less, what the days and months of a year may bring forth. *For what* [*is*] *your life*, upon the continuance of which all your worldly projects depend? *For it is* only like *a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanishes away*, and is seen no more; how gay soever its form might be, and how wide
15 soever it might have extended itself. *Whereas ye* [*ought*] *to say* in consideration of this, *If the* great *Lord* of our lives *will* please to lengthen them, *we shall live, and do this or that*, intimating even by your manner of speaking, the sense that you have, of his being able at pleasure to cut you short in all your purposes and appoint-
16 ments. *But now you rejoice in your boastings;* you take pleasure in this arrogant and confident manner of talking: whereas, *all such rejoicing*
17 *is evil*, and ought to be corrected: And so much the rather, as you have been better instructed than many others, and *therefore* ought to shew the good effect of these instructions. For *to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is* aggravated *sin;* and it would have been

13 Go to now, ye that say, To-day or To-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow: for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15 For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

been much better for him, that he had wanted that degree of knowledge he had, than that he should thus abuse it.

V. 1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, that shall come upon *you*.

I direct these things especially to those who have the advantage of the Christian revelation and institutions; but I confine not myself wholly to them. Let others pay them regard, in proportion to the degree in which they have opportunities of attaining Divine knowledge. Let them take the greatest care, that they do not abuse it. And let those especially be careful, whom Providence has distinguished by the fulness of their circumstances; which often proves a temptation to vice, though it should in all reason and gratitude be an engagement to virtue and piety. Experience will soon teach many such the vanity of those things in which they pride themselves, and which embolden them in their transgressions of the Divine law. *Come now* therefore, *ye rich men*[b], *weep, and* even *howl over the miseries that are* speedily *coming upon you*, in those days which are nearly approaching. You have been solicitous to lay up abundant stores for your future subsistence and security; but *your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold, and* your *silver*, which should have been brightened by a generous circulation, have been hoarded up, till they *are cankered, and their rust shall be a witness against you* in the sight of God, *and* so bring upon you such awful rebukes from him, that it *shall*, as it were, *eat* into *your flesh*, with an anguish as piercing and corroding *as fire* itself. *Ye have laid up treasures for the last days*[c]; for the last days are now coming, and the enemy shall seize and dissipate them all to your infinite vexation and distress. *Behold the wages of the labourers, who have reaped your fields, who have been defrauded by you* of their due reward, *cry* for vengeance against you; and

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth;

2 3

4

b *Ye rich men*, &c.] *Josephus*, (*Bell. Jud.* v. 20, 30; iv. 19,) particularly observes, how much the *rich men* suffered by the Romans in the Jewish war.——I have rendered ταλαιπωριαις ταις επερχομεναις, *miseries which are coming upon you*, and I think it more agreeable to the *original* than our English version; επερχομεναις being a *participle* of the *present tense*.

c *The last days.*] This phrase does not merely signify, for *the time to come*, but for *that period*, when the whole Jewish economy was to close, and when those awful *judgments* threatened in the *prophets* to be poured out upon wicked men in the *last days*, are just coming, Acts ii. 17; Heb. i. 2; 2 Pet. iii. 3; and the like. Compare Mat. xxiv. 33, 34; 1 Cor. x. 11.

d *For*

SECT. vii.

and the out-cries of those who have gathered in your harvest, have come into the ears of the Lord of hosts. *Ye have lived delicately and luxuriously upon the earth,* indulging yourselves in every desire that rose in your minds, without restraint. *Ye have pampered your hearts, as* beasts are fed *for a day of slaughter*[d]; and truly to you it is much nearer than you are aware. And well has the vengeance been deserved by you; for *ye have condemned* [*and*] at last *murdered the righteous one,* the Son of God himself; [*and*] *he doth not* yet *resist you*[e] with that display of power which he can easily exert to your utter destruction; but the day will speedily come, when God will avenge his cause, and pour out the judgment he has threatened, on those who have treated him in so base and unworthy a manner.

James V. 4.

crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

7 Since this is the case, since our Divine Master has met with such injurious treatment, and borne it with such steady patience; *be ye therefore,* my *brethren,* long-suffering and *patient,* even *till the coming of the Lord* Jesus Christ; *behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth;* [*and*] though it does not immediately appear, when sown, or ripen when it appears; yet he *exerciseth patience with respect to it, till he receive the former rain,* to produce it, *and the latter,* to bring it on to perfection.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 *Be ye also patient,* and *strengthen your hearts* in every good resolution; *for the appearance of the Lord is near;* he will quickly come, and reward all your long-suffering, and take vengeance on your implacable enemies, for all the outrages they have committed against you.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

IMPROVEMENT.

Chap. iv. 12.

LET the *law* of that one *great Legislator, who is able* both *to save and to destroy,* be always seriously remembered and considered; that we may not affront his authority in pretending to *judge others,*

d *For a day of slaughter:* ως εν ημερα σφαγης.] There are some who render this, *as in a festival,* when many sacrifices are *slain.* But Wolfius observes, that the word is always used in the *Seventy* to signify not a day of *feasting,* but of *slaughter.*

e *Not resist you.*] Instead of ουκ, Dr. *Bentley* would read ουχ for ο κυριος, *the Lord;* and would render it, *and the Lord resists you;* that is, you have brought the vengeance of his almighty arm upon you. *Memoirs of Literat.* Vol. VI. p. 173.—Others interpret it of the *meek* sufferings of the disciples of Christ, in conformity to the *example* of their Master.

others, nor set up for *judges*, and in effect *condemners of the law*, by the severity of those censures which we pass upon our brethren. SECT. vii.

We are happy in *knowing* that sacred rule of life, if we obey it; otherwise, that *knowledge* of it which adds an aggravation even to *sins of omission*, will much more aggravate every presumptuous *opposition to it*. Chap. iv. 11 17

Let us look on this world as a scene of great uncertainty; and on *life, as a flattering vapour*, which *vanishes* while we are beholding it; and let a sense of its shortness and uncertainty, and of our own *ignorance what shall be on the morrow* engage us to be very careful, that we do not *presume upon the future*, as if it were in our own power; but set ourselves with all possible diligence *to improve the present time*, referring the disposal of all future events, to the wisdom of *that God* on whom it depends to determine whether *we shall live, and do this, or that* 14 15

Let rich men read the address of the *apostle* to persons in their circumstances, with *holy awe*, and with a jealousy over themselves, lest their present *prosperity* be succeeded with *misery*, and their *joy with weeping and howling*; as it undoubtedly will be, if wealth be *unjustly* gotten, or sordidly *hoarded up*, or *luxuriously* employed to pamper their appetites, while the truest and noblest use of it, the relief of the poor, and the benefit of mankind, is forgotten. Especially have they reason to tremble who abuse wealth and power *as the instruments of oppression*; soon will all their stores be wasted, soon will they become naked and indigent, and find a terrible *account* remaining, when all the gaieties and pleasures of life are utterly vanished. In the mean time, the *saints* of God may be among the *poor and the oppressed*: but let them *wait patiently for the day of the Lord, for his coming is near. They sow in tears*, but let them *comfort their hearts* with the view of *the harvest*; in like manner as the *husbandman* demands not *immediately* the fruits of that seed he has committed to the furrows. Adored be that kind Providence, which gives *the former and the latter rain in its season*. To him, from whom we have received *the bounties of nature*, let us humbly look for the *blessings of grace*, and trust him to fulfil all his promises, who without a promise to bind him, in particular instances, *give us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness*. Acts xiv. 17. Chap. v. 1 2, 5 6 8 7

SECT. VIII.

He concludes the epistle with inculcating moderation and fortitude, cautioning them against profane and vain swearing, and recommending prayer, a ready acknowledgment of our faults, and a solicitous concern for the common salvation. James V. 9, *to the end.*

JAMES V. 9.

SECT. viii. James V. 9.

AND now, to draw to a conclusion, *be not inwardly incensed against each other, brethren,* so as to grudge or envy one another any superior advantages in life, or to harbour even that malignity of disposition which should groan in secret [a], while it wants opportunities of mischief; *that you* yourselves *be not condemned,* for *behold the Judge is standing before the door;* he is now present, and sees all the irregularities of your tempers, as well as actions; in consequence of which he will quickly bring these inward disorders of mind into judgment, as well as the
10 enormities of the life. And that you may be fortified against such trying circumstances, *my brethren, take for an example of enduring adversity, and of long-suffering* under the greatest provocations, *the* holy *prophets* of old, *who spake* to our fathers *in the name of the Lord,* and gave such convincing evidences of their Divine in-
11 spiration. (Heb. xi. 36, 37.) *Behold,* in this respect *we esteem them happy* [b], *who endure* steadily and patiently the trials which God appoints for them. In this view, *ye have heard of the* celebrated *patience of Job,* with how much honour it is proclaimed from generation to generation; *and ye have* also *seen the end of the Lord* [c], how much to his honour, and how much to

JAMES V. 9.

GRUDGE not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

a Groan in secret.] Thus I have *paraphrased* the words, because it is well known, that the original στεναζετε, (as Beza observes,) has this signification. Justin Martyr represents the Jewish converts, as the *worst* sort of Christians, who were apt to be impatient of the Gentile yoke, and to retain their attachment to the views of a *temporal* kingdom.

b *We esteem them happy, &c.*] The Apostle speaks of this, not only as *his own* judgment, but that of *all* Christians who judged right, and understood the nature of things. And it is indeed a *judgment* in which *all* Christians should be agreed.

c *Seen the end of the Lord.*] It is observable, that in Job xlii. 7, &c. God decides the cause in his *favour,* and calls him

to his comfort, his various and heavy afflictions concluded; *that the Lord is full of compassion, and of tender mercy*, and it is with the bowels of an affectionate Father, that he corrects his beloved children, not for his own gratification, but from a view to their advantage. SECT. VIII. James V. 11.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

Among other effects of that impatience, against which I am cautioning you, may be reckoned the irreverent use of the name of God, and profane oaths and execrations, into which in the transport of their criminal passions, some unhappy wretches are ready to fall; *but* be you *above all things, my brethren*, careful, that ye *swear not*, upon such occasions, or on any other, lightly and profanely [d], *neither by heaven* the throne of God, *nor by earth*, his footstool, *nor by any other oath; but* remember the command of our blessed Lord, (Mat. v. 37,) and *let your yea be yea, and* [*your*] *nay nay;* content yourselves with a simple affirmation or negation, and take care to maintain such constant integrity in all your words, that nothing more may be needful to gain them credit; *that ye may not fall under condemnation* for profaning the name of God, and lessening the regard due to an oath, when used on the most solemn and necessary occasions. 12

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Accustom yourselves to the frequent exercises of devotion, as what will have the surest tendency to promote the comfort and happiness of your lives in every *circumstance*. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray*, and cast the burden of his cares and sorrows upon the compassionate God, always ready to sustain his people. *Is any cheerful*, in easy and agreeable circumstances? *let him* rejoice in God, and *sing psalms* of praise to him in a thankful acknowledgment of his mercies. 13

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Is any one among you sick? let him under his confinement *call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him* for his recovery, *anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord* Jesus Christ, if they feel themselves so instigated to do it by the secret workings of the Spirit of grace upon their minds, as may encourage them to 14

him his *servant Job* four times in the compass of a few verses.

d *Swear not.*] This the Jews were very apt to do upon trifling occasions.

e *The*

SECT. viii.

to hope for an extraordinary cure: *And the prayer of faith*[c], in such a circumstance as this, James V. 15. *shall save* and recover *the sick; and the Lord shall*, in answer to prayer, *raise him up; and if he hath committed sins*, which have brought this sickness upon him by way of extraordinary punishment, *they shall be forgiven him;* and the Lord shall have mercy upon him, and recover him according to the words of his servant.

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 When you are conscious of having been really to blame; do not perversely vindicate a conduct which your own hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. *Confess* [*your*] *faults one to another*[f]; for we are all too ready to stumble in the way of our duty; *and pray for one another*, especially when your brethren are under God's afflicting hand, or have been under any visible declension in religion, *that you may be healed*, and recovered. *The* earnest *prayer of a righteous man*, the effect of good affections *wrought* in his heart *by the energy of the* Holy 17 *Spirit*[g] *is of great efficacy.* Many instances of this you know are recorded in scripture; and among others, that of *Elijah*, who *was a man subject to the like infirmities with us*, (compare Acts xiv. 15,) *and* had himself no greater command over the clouds and the rain than any of us; yet *he prayed with a prayer*, that is, with great faith and fervency, *that it might not rain;* which was not the effect of any resentment he had

16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: And it

[c] *The prayer of faith.*] I can by no means think, that this is advised merely physically. By the *prayer of faith*, I understand, such a *faith* as is founded on some more than ordinary *impression*, by which God intimated an intention of *working a miracle;* and I look upon it as a very considerable proof, that, as the power of working miracles was not *absolutely* confined to the apostles, so it might in some instances continue something *longer* in the church than their days. Lord Barrington indeed thinks, that the expression, *if he hath committed sin*, &c. refers to the commission of such a sin as had engaged the apostle to deliver them to Satan, in order, to *corporeal* punishment. But I hardly think an *elder of the church* would then have been mentioned; and one cannot imagine, that when the apostles were so *few*, and two of them comparatively so seldom together, the expression, "*Send for the elders of the church,*" should mean, Send for *some of the apostles.* How vastly different this is from the *extreme unction*, practised by the papists, not for cure, but only when life is *despaired* of, I think every reasonable man may easily judge.

[f] *Confess* [*your*] *faults*, &c.] The general candid sense which I have given to the words, and which is a very *important* one, seems to me utterly to supersede *all pretences* to claim from them any *priestly* power, or to the requiring *confession* in the manner which the *church of Rome* does. For the confession here mentioned is plainly spoken of as *mutual.*

[g] *Wrought—by the energy of the Spirit.*] The word ενεργουμενη, as Bishop Hopkins, (in *his Works*, p. 749,) observes, seems to imply this sense. I have not *confined* it to the prayer of *miraculous faith.*

h *Three*

it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

had against his country for the ill usage he met with, but in obedience to a secret intimation, that it was the will of God to glorify himself by sending upon them such a punishment for their idolatry; *and* the event, though so improbable, was correspondent to his prayer; for *it rained not upon the land for three years and six months*[h]; computing the time from the beginning of the famine to the end of it. *And he prayed again,* at the end of that time, that God would be pleased to remove the heavy affliction which the drought occasioned; *and* the small cloud which appeared at first, soon spread itself over the whole horizon, so that *the heaven gave rain* in abundance, *and the land put forth* the green blade again, and yielded *its fruit* in great quantity, to repay the barrenness of former years.

SECT. viii.

James V. 17.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

18

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

And now *brethren*, let me conclude with one exhortation of the greatest importance both to yourselves and others; which is, that you labour to the utmost to promote the spiritual good of your fellow-creatures; for *if any one of you wander from the truth, and one turn him back* to it, and lead him to tread its forsaken paths, he performs the most important charity that can be imagined: For *let him know, that he who* thus *turneth back a sinner from the error* and fatal wanderings *of his way*, shall produce a much happier effect than any miraculous cure of the body; for he *shall save a* precious *soul from* everlasting *death*[i], ruin, and condemnation, *and so* vail, or *cover, a multitude of sins;* not only procuring the pardon of those committed by the convert, but also engaging God to look with greater indulgence on his own character, and to be less ready severely to mark all he shall have done amiss.

19

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

20

IMPROVE-

h *Three years and six months.*] Elijah is said, 1 Kings xviii. 1, &c. to have showed himself to Ahab *in the third year*; that is, from his going to live at Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 8, 9, 14, but from the beginning to the end of the famine was three years and six months, according to the account given by St. James, as also in Luke iv. 25.

i *Save a soul from death*, &c.] This way of expression intimates in the strongest manner, the *infinite importance* of such an event; as to *save a soul from death* is yet more than *hiding the sins* of the convert. As to the latter clause, Bishop *Atterbury*, and Dr. *Scott*, urge the interpretation given in the last words of the *paraphrase*. See *Atterbury's Serm.* Vol. I. p. 46—48; *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. I. p. 368. And I have not seen reason, on the most attentive enquiry, to disallow the force of their arguments. Compare 1 Pet. iv. 8, and the *note* there.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. viii.

MAY it ever be remembered by *all*, and especially by the *ministers of the gospel*, of how great importance it is to be instrumental in *saving a soul from death*, an *immortal* soul from *everlasting* death; that so they may be animated to the most zealous and laborious efforts for that blessed purpose; and think themselves richly rewarded, though it were for the otherwise *unsuccessful labours* of a *whole* life, by succeeding even in a *single* instance. In this view, may there be a care *to bring them to the truth*, that so they may be *converted from their wandering ways* that their understandings being convinced of the truth and importance of the gospel, their conduct may be practically influenced by it; and that upon such *steady* principles, as may effectually prevent their *return* to their wanderings again. Thus may a *multitude of sins be hidden*, and the glory of God, and the salvation of men, be effectually promoted.

Ver. 20 19

Whatever *trials* we may meet with in these charitable efforts, or in any other path of duty, may we *take the prophets of old*, and *the apostles of our Lord*, *for examples of suffering adversity and patience*; especially remembering *their Lord*, and *ours*; remembering how abundantly the patience of good men has been rewarded, *the end of the Lord* with respect to holy *Job*, and many others, who have trod in his steps in succeeding ages; and remembering especially, that *the Judge stands at the door*, that in a very little time he will appear, not only to put an end to the trial of his servants, but to crown their virtues and graces. In the mean time the bowels of his *compassion* are abundant, and he will not be wanting in communicating all necessary consolations and supports. May we be so happy, as to be acquainted with *those of devotion*, that in our *affliction* we may *pray*, and in our *cheerfulness*, *sing psalms*; that we may know by blessed experience the efficacy of such a temper to soften the sorrows of life, and to sweeten its enjoyments. And as we desire to be *visited of God* in our *afflictions*, may we with *Christian* sympathy be ready to visit and relieve others in their *sickness*, or other kinds of *distress*. It is indeed the special office of the *elders of the church*, who should be *sent for* upon such occasions with readiness, and who, if they be worthy of their office, will attend with pleasure. But it is not *their* office *alone*. Let us all be ready to *pray for each other*, in *faith* and *charity*; and where offences have been committed, let there be a frank and candid *acknowledgment* of them on the one side, and

11 9 11 13 14 15 16

and as hearty a *forgiveness* on the other. In a word, let the *efficacy of the fervent prayer of the righteous* be often reflected on, to excite *fervour*, and to engage to *righteousness*, and to lead us to honour those who maintain such a character, and who offer such *petitions* and supplications; that God may in answer to their requests, *shower down his blessing upon us, that our land may yield its increase, that righteousness may spring up out of the earth, and that in* every sense, *God*, as *our own God, may bless us.* (Psal. lxvii. 9; lxxxv. 11.) SECT. viii. 17, 18

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE *PETER.*

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THE Apostle Peter makes a very eminent and illustrious figure on the theatre of the evangelical history, and was, on several occasions, favoured by our Lord with peculiar and distinguishing marks of honour. One instance, which I shall alone recite, among the many which might be recited, if it was needful, and which happened very soon after our Lord's ascension, is, that he was deemed worthy, under the impulse and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to open the gospel-dispensation, and *first* to preach salvation through a crucified Redeemer to the Jews, (Acts ii.) and Gentiles (Acts x.) And I the rather suggest this instance, because it affords some colour to my own opinion, that this epistle was written both to the Jewish and Gentile converts, who were dispersed in various regions of the world.

The sentiments of learned men upon this question—*To whom was this epistle written?*—are very various. The principal and most remarkable are these—That it was to the converted Jews of the dispersion—Or to the converted Gentiles—Or lastly (which is the opinion of Lord Barrington, embraced and defended by Dr. Benson) to the converted *proselytes of the gate.* It is not necessary in this place *, to enter into a particular confutation of the last mentioned *hypothesis;* especially as I apprehend what is suggested in my *notes* on several passages of the Acts, may convince an attentive reader, that there is no sufficient ground to suppose there were ever any such persons as *proselytes of the gate.* And as to the *two former* opinions, when the several arguments by which they are

* The learned author intended, had Providence prolonged his valuable life, to have published a distinct dissertation on this subject. But this, and many other designs he had projected, for the benefit of the church and the world, were prevented by his justly-lamented death.

are supported, are duly considered and examined, we shall perhaps be inclined to imagine that the *apostle* rather designed his epistle for the Jewish and Gentile converts *both*, than for either of them *distinctly* and *separately*. Without discussing the reasons for the opinion I have adopted, I shall leave the reader to form his own judgment, after he hath perused my *paraphrase* and *notes* on those passages of this epistle on which it is founded.

It is not very easy to assign the date of this *epistle* with exactness. The most commonly received opinion is, that it was written in the year 61, the seventh of the emperor Nero; and this seems to be a *medium*, between the sentiments of those who place it some years higher, and those who place it lower, which bids fairest for the truth.

It is evidently the *design* of this epistle, "To induce the Christian converts, in various parts of the world, to maintain a conversation, not merely inoffensive to all men, but in all respects worthy of the gospel; and to support them under the severe persecutions, and fiery trials they already endured, or were likely to endure, by the noblest considerations which their religion could suggest."

The *first* branch of this design the *apostle* seems to keep particularly in view from chap. i—iii. 7. And in pursuance of it, after having congratulated his brethren, who were dispersed abroad through various countries, on their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel, which was introduced into the world in so sublime a manner by the prophets and apostles (chap. 1—12,) he exhorts them to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to universal obedience, by an affecting representation of their relation to God, their redemption by Christ's invaluable blood, and the excellence and perpetuity of the Christian dispensation, and of its glorious fruits and consequences, compared with the vanity of all worldly enjoyments. (ver. 13, *to the end.)* Urging them, by the like considerations, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ as the great foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as would adorn his gospel among the unconverted Gentiles. (chap. ii. 1—12.) For the same end, he exhorts them to the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly, a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even when their dispositions and injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings. (ver. 13, *to the end.)* He likewise exhorts Christian wives to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornaments of their minds rather than of their persons; and husbands to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable. (chap. iii. 1—7.)

In the ensuing part of the epistle, the *apostle's* arguments and exhortations more immediately and directly refer to those dreadful

ful sufferings and persecutions to which the Christian converts were exposed, or which they actually endured, from the malevolence and rage of their implacable enemies. And here, well knowing that such treatment, unmerited and unprovoked, is apt to embitter and narrow men's spirits, and inflame their resentments; in which case the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus would be greatly dishonoured, and its spread and influence in the world retarded by the indiscreet behaviour of its friends and advocates; therefore St. Peter urges many arguments on the Christian converts, in order to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life, and conversation; and to a steady, courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition. (ver. 8—17.) And then animating them to endure their sufferings with patience and resignation, from the endearing consideration of what their Divine Saviour had suffered for them, he expatiates on his atonement, resurrection, and exaltation; on the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and on the awful solemnity of the last judgment, as powerful arguments to a life of mortification and holiness, whatever discouragement and opposition they might be called to encounter, (ver. 18—iv. 6.) And as eminent vigilance, fidelity, and courage, would be requisite for rightly improving their talents, and for discharging the duties of their respective stations in the church, at all times, but especially in times of imminent danger and persecution, he distinctly inculcates these several virtues; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes, that a tremendous, inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving. (ver. 7—19.) And at the close, he addresses some particular cautions both to ministers and private Christians; urging on the former, humility, diligence, and watchfulness; and exhorting the latter to a stedfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this sublime consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered awhile, make them perfect, according to the *apostle's* earnest prayer for them; chap. v. *throughout.*

From this imperfect delineation of this admirable epistle, the production of another eminent *apostle*, it is no unnatural or improper remark, that all the principles of our holy religion, as here represented, are perfectly consistent with the *analogy of faith*, and with the whole tenor of the New Testament, that they are directly levelled against all manner of corrupt affections and immoral practices, as well as urged in the light of motives to all those virtues and graces, in which our conformity to God, and and the true glory of our nature consists. And (which, if it were the only circumstance that could be pleaded, would exalt our religion to an infinite superiority to the institutions of the most renowned heathen philosophers and law-givers, and in connection with its amazing progress, is a demonstration of its Divine original) Christians are here instructed to encounter outrageous violence

lence and persecution only with the hallowed weapons of patience, meekness, and charity, and to silence the cavils, and blast the machinations of their own and their Master's bitterest enemies, with the lustre of a pure and holy life, and the fervour of a generous and invincible benevolence. How amiable, how elevated, how divine, how worthy of all acceptation is the religion of Jesus !—In delineating, as we have seen, the grand and essential branches of which even Peter and Paul, notwithstanding all their contention about things of inferior moment, or of a personal and private nature, are perfectly consistent and harmonious.

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

St. PETER.

SECT. I.

The Apostle Peter begins his address to his brethren, who were dispersed abroad, with congratulating their happiness in being called to the glorious privileges and hopes of the gospel; and takes occasion to expatiate upon the sublime manner in which it was introduced both by the prophets and apostles. 1 Pet. I. 1—12.

1 PETER I. 1.

PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered through-

1 PETER I. 1.

PETER, who has the honour to be invested with the office of *an Apostle of Jesus Christ*, inscribes and addresses this epistle *to the elect strangers who are scattered abroad*[a]; to those Christians

SECT. I. 1 Peter I. 1.

[a] *Scattered abroad.*] Lord *Barrington*, (*Miscel. Sacr.* Essay II. p. 84—88,) strenuously maintains, that St. Peter wrote only to the converted *proselytes of the gate;* and in favour of this opinion he urgeth their being called *strangers;* which he thinks is the stile *peculiar* to those who having renounced idolatry, and receiving the seven precepts of Noah, were yet *strangers to the commonwealth of* Israel. He supposes they must have been Gentiles, because they are said, *once not to have been a people*, chap. ii. 9, 10, and to have been *ignorant*, verse 14, and to have *wrought the will of the Gentiles*, chap. iv. 3; and he also pleads, from chap. i. 22, where they are said to have *purified their souls by obeying the truth*, that it is likely they were *proselytes of the gate*, because a parallel expression is used by St. Peter concerning Cornelius and his friends, (Acts xv. 9. See Vol. VIII. § 33, *note* h,) whom he supposes to have been such. He likewise argues from their being addressed in these words, *If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work*, (chap. i. 17.) by St. Peter, who had himself addressed Cornelius in almost the same terms. (Acts x. 34, 35. See Vol. VIII.

SECT. I.

1 Peter I. 1. Christians whom Providence has dispersed *through* various countries, and whom Divine grace has taught to consider themselves, wherever they dwell, as strangers and sojourners on earth; and particularly to those who inhabit the regions of *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, and those throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

2 in the provinces of *Asia and Bithynia*. I call you [*elect*,] because you are indeed chosen *according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father*, who has projected all his schemes with the most consummate wisdom, and perfect discerning of every future event. He has been pleased, according to the steady purposes of his grace, to bring you *by* means of the *sanctification of the Spirit*, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost operating upon your souls, *to* evangelical *obedience*. He has subdued all your prejudices against the gospel, and effectually engaged you to submit to it; *and* thus you are interested in the pardon of sin, and in all the other blessings which proceed from *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, whereby forgiveness is obtained for us Christians as it was for the Jews under the law upon sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices; and may this, and every other instance and degree of *grace, and* all the *peace* consequent upon it, *be multiplied unto you* all, wherever you are, and whatever your condition and circumstances

2 Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

3 in life may be. Whatever your afflictions are in this variable and troublesome world, I hope you never will forget, how indispensably you are obliged to thankfulness on account of your Christian privileges; and to such thankfulness let me now excite you and myself: *blessed* therefore [*be*] *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath regenerated us to a* great, important and *lively hope* of future happiness *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead;* upon whom indeed,

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

VIII. § 23, *note* c.) He pleads in support of the same opinion, their being called *Christians*, (chap. iv. 16,) a title which he supposes was first given to the converted *proselytes of the gate*, of which the church at Antioch, where they were first called Christians, in his apprehension, consisted. (Acts xi. 26. See Vol. VIII. § 25, *note* f.) But all this appears to me to be utterly inconclusive; it is in part obviated already in my *notes* on the Acts; and as for the force which may seem to remain in his *lordship's* arguments, arising from the phrases in which St. Peter addresses those to whom he writes, it is, I think, entirely annihilated, by supposing that the epistle was written both to the converted Jews and Gentiles; of which the reader will be able to form a judgment, by observing whether my *paraphrase* of the several passages in question be natural and easy.

SECT. i.

deed, and upon whose resurrection, all our hopes depend. And by whom we are brought *to* the cheerful and confident expectation of *an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled* [b], *and unfading*, which nothing can spoil, which nothing can pollute, and which is incapable of any internal decay, as well as external violence. This inheritance is *reserved in the heavens for you*, and for all true believers; *Who*, though now surrounded with many apparent dangers, are not left defenceless, but *are guarded*, as in a strong and impregnable garrison [c], *by the* almighty *power of God*, *through* the continued exercise of that *faith* which this almighty power wrought in your hearts; and he will still maintain it *unto* that blessed hour, when you shall receive the complete and eternal *salvation* which is already *prepared*, and though now kept as under a veil, is *to be revealed* in its full radiance of glory, *in the last time* [d], the grand period, in which all the mysteries of Divine Providence shall beautifully terminate. This is the blessed state and condition to which by the gospel you are brought, *in which*, and in the glorious hopes which it inspires, *you* cannot but *rejoice, though now for a little while, if it be necessary you are grieved*, and distressed *amidst various trials*. You know they are all under the direction of the infinite wisdom of your heavenly Father, who would not subject you to them, did he not see them to be subservient to your truest happiness; and they will ere long be brought to an everlasting period. His intention in all is most kind and gracious, namely, *that the little trial*

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, — 1 Peter 1. 4.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. — 5

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be,) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: — 6

7 That the trial of your faith being much more — 7

b *Undefiled.*] That is, into which nothing that *polluteth* can enter. The land of Canaan was said to be defiled by sinners; to which perhaps there may here be an allusion. Compare Rev. xxi. 27.

c *Are guarded, &c.*] The original word, φρουρουμενους, is very *emphatical*, and properly signifies, *being kept as in an impregnable garrison*, secure from harm, under the observation of an *all-seeing eye*, and protection of an *almighty hand*. *Blackwall's Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 196 Compare 2 Cor. xi. 32, in the Greek.

d *In the last time.*] This plainly refers to the second appearance of Christ, called *the last time*, because it will be the concluding scene of all the Divine dispensations relating to this world. For the same reason it is called *the last day*, John vi. 39; and xi. 24 And the design of the passage before us confirms this interpretation, since the *apostle* is here speaking of the full manifestation of the future happiness reserved in heaven for them. Some would connect, *in the last time*, with their being *kept by the power of God*; and understand it, as if the apostle had said, Though our lot is cast in the *last time*, when the temptations to apostacy are so great and powerful, we are, notwithstanding, preserved from all the dangers to which we are exposed.

e Not

SECT. i.

1 Peter I. 7.

trial of your faith, which is *far more precious* and valuable *than* that *of gold which perishes* and wears out in time, *though it be tried with fire*, and purified to the highest degree; *may be found to praise and honour and glory, in* the great day of *the revelation of Jesus Christ*, the Divine Author and Finisher of our faith, who having endured yet sorer trials, will rejoice to applaud and reward the fidelity of his servants in his
8 cause: I say, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, that glorious Redeemer, *whom not having seen* [e] with your bodily eyes, nor personally conversed with him, *ye* nevertheless *love*, and *in whom, though now you see* [*him*] *not, yet* assuredly *believing, ye rejoice*, as your almighty Saviour, Friend and Protector, *with unutterable and* even *glorified joy*, with such a joy as seems to
9 anticipate that of the Saints in glory; *Receiving* with unspeakable delight, as a full equivalent of all your trials, *the* great *end of your faith, even the* complete *salvation of* [*your*] *souls*; a prize of infinitely greater importance, than all
10 you can be called to sacrifice for its sake! *Concerning which salvation, the prophets, who predicted the grace* of the gospel [*which was appointed*] *to you, sought and diligently enquired; Searching* with the deepest and most attentive
11 reflection, *to what* period *or* to *what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them, did refer* [f] *when he testified* long *before* they came *to* pass, *the* various *sufferings which were to come upon Christ, and the* exalted and permanent *glory which was to succeed* them, and render him
12 and his kingdom so perpetually illustrious, and his servants so completely happy. To the memorable testimony of these prophets it becomes

more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now you see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto

e *Not having seen.*] It is very possible that among these *dispersed Christians*, there might be some who had visited Jerusalem whilst Christ was there, and might have seen, or even conversed with him; but as the *greater part* had not, St. Peter speaks according to the usual *apostolic* manner, as if they *all* had not. Thus he speaks of them *all* as loving Christ, though there might be some among them who were *destitute* both of this divine principle, and of that *joy* which he speaks of, as, δεδοξασμενη, *wrought up even to glory.*

f *Spirit of Christ which was in them*, &c.] It is well worthy our notice, that the *Spirit* which dictated to the *prophets*, is called the *Spirit of Christ*; which (as Mr. Fleming observes, *Christol.* Vol. I. p. 185) both proves his *existence* before his *incarnation*, and illustrates the *full* view he himself had of all he was to do and suffer under the character of our Redeemer; the particulars of which therefore must have been comprehended in the *stipulations* between *him* and the *Father*.—The *apostle* in discoursing so largely concerning the *prophets*, seems to have a special reference to the converted Jews, who would enter more thoroughly into *this* part of his reasoning than the converted Gentiles.

unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

SECT. i.

1 Peter I. 12.

comes us to pay a sincere and profound regard, *to whom* such extraordinary discoveries were made, as no attentive reader can view without conviction and astonishment; and *it was revealed*[g] to them among other things, *that* [*it was*] *not to themselves, but to us*, that *they ministered these things:* they knew that we, when the events arose, should have a more complete understanding of these oracles, than any who declared them, had. Consider then, how happy you are in that dispensation under *which* you *now* live, when those Divine mysteries, which were only in a more obscure manner hinted at by the prophets, *are* most clearly and expressly *declared to you, by those who have published the glad tidings of the gospel among you, by the* evident authority and attestation, as well as by the assistances of the *Holy Spirit sent down from heaven*, with such visible glory, and testifying his continued residence amongst us by such wonderful effects. And indeed, the doctrines *which* they preach, are *things* of so great excellence and importance, as to be well worthy *the* regard of *angels*, as well as men; and accordingly, (as the images of the cherubim on the mercy-seat, seemed to bow down, to look upon the tables of the law laid up in the ark,) so those celestial spirits do, from their heavenly abode, *desire to bend down*[h] *to* [*contemplate*] such glorious displays of Divine wisdom and goodness, and attentively to survey those important scenes that are opening upon us here on earth; which is become so much more considerable than it would otherwise be, as it is honoured with being the theatre of such glorious events.

IMPROVE-

g *To whom it was revealed, &c*] I think this *text* plainly proves, that the *prophets* had some *general* intimation, that their *prophecies* referred to the Messiah; but that they did not understand *every* clause of them in their full force, nor so well as *we* understand them, who are capable of comparing them with the event.

h *Angels desire to bend down*, &c.] Thus it is in the original επιθυμουσιν παρακυψαι, *desire to stoop down to, in allusion* no doubt, (as Mr. Saurin, *Diss.* Vol. II. p. 266, has beautifully illustrated it, and many others have remarked,) to the *bending posture* in which they were represented on the *mercy-seat.* And Mr. Blackwall observes, (*Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 431,) that it may denote, not only the *attentive curiosity* with which they may inquire into the gospel, but the *humility* of their *adoration*, whereas it is very probable that their *apostate* brethren refused to *stoop* to such a scheme.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. i. ARE we desirous of rendering it apparent to ourselves, and all around us, that we are *indeed the elect of God?* Let it be, by Ver. 2 an humble *application to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus*, on the one hand, and by the evident fruits of *the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience*, on the other.

3 *The abundant mercy of God*, hath begotten real Christians *to* 4 *the lively hope of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven for them:* let us keep it steadily in view, and earnestly pray, that God would *preserve us by his* 5 *mighty power through faith unto salvation.* Whilst we are *waiting* for this salvation, it is very possible, yea probable, affliction may be our portion; but let us remember, it is *if need be*, that 6 *we are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Our faith*, and our other graces, are as it were thrown into *the furnace*, not to 7 *be consumed, but refined;* that they may *be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ.* Even at pre- 8 sent, may this Divine faith produce that *love to an unseen Jesus*, which is here so naturally expressed by the *apostle;* and *though now we see him not*, yet may that *love* be eminently productive of *joy*, even that joy which is *unspeakable and full of glory;* and in the lively and vigorous exercise of these graces, may we all 9 *receive the end of our faith, even the* everlasting *salvation of our souls!*

10 Let what we are here told of the *prophetic* writers be improved as it ought, to confirm our faith in that glorious *gospel*, of which these holy men have given in their *writings* such wonderful intimations and predictions; writings which we have such excellent advantages for more *distinctly and clearly* understanding, than even they *themselves* did. What exalted ideas should we 11 entertain of a *dispensation* introduced by such a series of wonders, 12 preached by the inspired *prophets*, and by the *Holy Ghost* in his miraculous gifts and salutary influence *sent down from heaven:* a dispensation *into* the glories *of which the angels desire to pry;* how much more worthy then, the attention of the *children of men;* 2 who are so nearly concerned in it, who were redeemed from everlasting destruction by the blood of the Son of God? O! let us review it with the closest application, and improve it to the infinitely gracious and important purposes for which it was intended. Then will *grace and peace* be multiplied to us; and however we may now be *dispersed* and afflicted, *pilgrims* and *strangers*, we shall ere long be brought to our everlasting home,

and

and meet together in the presence of our dear and condescending *Saviour;* where having a more lively sense of our obligations to him, and beholding his *glory*, we shall love him infinitely better than at this distance we have been capable of, and feel our *joy* in him increased in a proportionable degree. SECT. i.

SECT. II.

The Apostle enforces his general exhortations to watchfulness, to sobriety, to love, and to obedience, by an affecting representation of our relation to God, our redemption by the invaluable blood of Christ, the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, and the excellence and perpetuity of the gospel-dispensation. 1 Pet. I. 13, *to the end.*

1 PETER I. 13.

WHEREFORE, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 PETER I. 13. SECT. ii.

I HAVE been endeavouring to give you some general ideas of the excellence and importance of the gospel-dispensation; reminding you of the wonderful manner in which it was introduced by the united labours of the prophets and apostles, and of the regard paid to it by the native inhabitants of the heavenly world. Regard it *therefore* as worthy the closest attention; and let the blessings of it be most vigorously pursued; and *girding up the loins of your mind,* that you may be capable of the most strenuous action, and *being* continually *sober* and temperate, and watchful against every thing that would ensnare and pollute you, *hope unto the end for the grace* and mercy *which shall be brought unto you, in the* great and glorious day of the *revelation of Jesus Christ.* Live in the view of his second appearance, and think every labour, and every self-denial happily bestowed, which may subserve your prospect of felicity in that important day. You have now the honour to be adopted into the family of God; conduct yourselves therefore *as* his *obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts,* which you indulged *in the time of your ignorance,* when you knew not this gospel, and were many of you in heathen darkness, and others under the imperfect dispensation of Moses: *But as he that has called you* to this glorious light, and participation of such invaluable blessings, *is holy, be*

1 Peter I. 13.

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance:

14

15 But as he which hath called you is holy,

15

SECT. ii.

be ye yourselves also holy in the whole of [*your*] *conversation*, in every thing you say and do; aspiring after this as your greatest honour, to bear the image of God in the moral perfections of his nature; *For it is written* in several passages of the Mosaic scriptures, (Lev. xi. 44; xix. 2; xx. 7,) *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* There is the same force in the argument now, respecting us Christians, which there was with regard to the Jews; yea greater force, in proportion to the degree in which the sanctity of the Divine Being is now more illustriously displayed; *And* accordingly let me exhort you, *if ye call upon the* God and *Father* of all, *who without respect of persons*, or any kind of partiality, whether to Jews or Gentiles, *judges every one according to* [*his*] *works*, to *converse during the time of your sojourning* here, with all becoming reverence and humility, *in* the religious *fear* of God; And so much the rather, *knowing*, the price of your redemption to have been so rich and invaluable. This is an important article of Divine knowledge, of which no Christian can be ignorant, *that you were not redeemed with corruptible things*, as *with silver and gold* [a], which however regarded by men, have no value in the sight of God; this, I say, was not the price which bought you *from your vain*, trifling, and unprofitable *conversation*, *received by tradition from your fathers* [b], from those hereditary superstitions, follies, and vices, which had in succeeding generations assumed the name and the garb of religion, and from the guilt which they had brought upon your souls. Ineffectual had all the treasures of the earth been to purchase help for us under so sad and deplorable a circumstance. *But* God was pleased to find out the only ransom, and has redeemed us *with the precious blood of Christ* his Son, *as of a lamb unblemished and unspotted*, free from the least degree of

1 Peter I. 15.

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ly, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot:

a *Redeemed with corruptible things, with silver and gold*, &c.] Some think here is an allusion to the *lamb*, which made an atonement, and was bought at the *common* expence furnished by the contribution of the *half-sheket*, as an atonement for their souls. Compare Exod. xxx. 11, &c. As for those that think here is a reference to the *stamp* of a *lamb* on the *Jewish coin*, I am neither sure of the truth of the fact, nor can I perceive the elegance of the supposed *allusion*. Compare *Weil's Geog.* of the *Old Test.* Vol. I. p. 275.

b *Received by tradition*, &c.] Some think this refers to the *Jewish traditions*; but perhaps it may express those vain *rites of worship* which for successive ages had been delivered down from parents to their children in the Gentile world.

c *Who*

of moral pollution, and therefore properly represented by those lambs, free from all corporeal spots and blemishes, which the Jews were required to offer as an expiation for their souls. SECT. ii. 1 Peter I. 19.

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

And as the paschal lamb was chosen, and set apart some time before it was sacrificed, so the Lord Jesus Christ, *who was indeed* typified by it, was known, approved, and *fore-appointed from the foundation of the world, but made manifest in these latter times*, by the clear preaching of the gospel, *for your sakes*, that ye might obtain redemption and salvation by him; Even ye all, *who by him*, and the manifestations of the Divine grace and mercy in him, are brought to repose your *trust* and confidence *in God*[c], *who raised him from the dead, and gave him*, such exalted *glory* and majesty in the celestial world; *that* so *your faith and hope might be in God*, and ye might be encouraged to commit all your concerns to him with chearful confidence, when he has appointed you such a Saviour; and to expect all blessings from that friendship with him which is founded upon the incarnation, atonement, and blood of his own Son. Let it be your care, therefore, that *having purified your souls* by an application to this fountain which God has opened, and *by* that *obedience to the truth* which will *through* the assistance of *the Spirit* be the result of such an application; and since the whole genius and design of this religion, which you have imbibed and professed, leads *to an undissembled brotherly love;* let it be your care, I say, to enter affectionately into its design and tendency; and to *love one another out of a pure heart;* operating fervently and *intensely*[d], and not to rest merely in those deceitful forms and professions of affection, with which the men of the world amuse themselves and each other; or in those trifling instances of friendship which can do little to approve its reality and sincerity. The temper and conduct which I recommend, may justly be expected from

20

21 Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

21

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren; *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently.

22

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed but

23

c *Who by him trust in God.*] This phrase is remarkable, and I think with Mr. *Hallet (see his Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 58.) that the meaning is, that Christians, who before their conversion were *ignorant* of the true God, learnt his *Being* and *Providence* from the great fact of *Christ's resurrection*, and the power with which God invested him on his *ascension* into heaven.

d *Intensely.*] So I think the word ἐκτενῶς properly signifies; according to the sense in which it is used by Polybius and Herodotus. See *Raphelius Annot. in loc.*

e *The*

SECT. ii.

from you, considering your relation to God, and to each other, as *having been regenerated, not by corruptible seed*, not by virtue of any descent from human parents, *but by incorruptible;* not laying the stress of your confidence on your pedigree from Abraham, if you had the honour to descend from that illustrious patriarch; for that descent could not entitle you to the important blessings of the gospel. It is *by* means of the efficacy of *the word of God* upon your hearts, even that powerful word *which lives and endures for ever*[e], that you are become entitled to these glorious evangelical privileges. *For* as the prophet Isaiah testifies, (Isaiah xl. 6,) *all flesh* [*is*] *as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass*, which is yet frailer than that; *the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth;* quickly deprived of its blooming honours, it drops, blasted and dying, to the ground. And thus precarious and uncertain are all the dependencies which we can have on perishing creatures; *But the word of the Lord abideth for ever* in undiminished force and vigour, nor can ten thousand succeeding ages prevent or abate its efficacy. *Now this*, which the prophet refers to in the oracle I have just been quoting, *is the word which is preached to you in the gospel:* shew therefore your regard to it by such a temper and behaviour, both towards God and man, as it was intended to inculcate and produce.

1 Peter I. 23. but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET it be matter of our daily delightful meditation, that while we clearly discern the uncertainty of all human dependencies, which wither like the *grass*, and fall like the *flower of the field*, the *word of God* is *permanent* and *immutable*. Let us cheerfully repose our souls on this stable, unfailing security; gratefully acknowledging the goodness of God, that he hath condescended to lay a foundation for our hope, so firm and durable as his own infallible word, and to make that word *the incorruptible seed of our regeneration*. If we have indeed experimentally known *its*

Ver. 24, 25, 23

e *The word of God, which lives and endures for ever.*] This is rendered by some, *Who lives and endures for ever*, referring it to God himself. But it is more agreeable to the design of the *apostle*, and (as Wolfius imagines to the order of the *original* words) to refer this clause to the *word* of God, which is here stiled *incorruptible seed*.

its efficacy and power, so that *our souls are purified by obeying the truth*, let us carefully express *our obedience to it, by undissembled, fervent brotherly love;* and animated by our glorious and exalted hopes as *Christians*, even that Divine and illustrious hope of the *grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ*, let us set ourselves to the vigorous discharge of every duty, as knowing that we should be *children of obedience*, having the excuse of *ignorance* no longer to plead for the indulgence of our lusts, but by a *holy God* being called with a *holy calling*, and instructed to invoke him, at once, as our gracious *Father* and impartial *Judge*. SECT. ii. Ver. 22 13 14

It is worthy of our special remark, that the blessed *apostle* urges us to *pass* the transitory and limited *time of our sojourning here in fear*, from the consideration of our *being redeemed by the blood of the Son of God*, which is a price of infinitely more value than all the treasures of the universe. And certainly there is a mighty *energy* in the argument; for as it is a very *amiable*, so it is also a very *awful* consideration. What heart so hardened, as not to tremble at *trampling on the blood of the Son of God*, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the important design of his death? Frustrating the design of a scheme, *projected from eternity* in the councils of heaven, and at length *made manifest* with every circumstance to convince our judgments, and engage our affections. And while we are reflecting on the *resurrection* and exaltation of our Redeemer, as the great foundation of our eternal hopes, let us *dread* to be found opposing *him*, whom God hath *established* on his own exalted throne; and with the utmost reverence *let us kiss the Son*, in token of our grateful acceptance of his mercy, and cheerful and humble submission to his *authority*. (Psal. ii. 12.) 17 18, 19 20 21

SECT. III.

The Apostle urges them, by a representation of their Christian privileges, to receive the word of God with meekness, to continue in the exercise of faith in Christ, as the great foundation of their eternal hopes, and to maintain such a behaviour as might adorn his gospel, among the unconverted Gentiles. 1 Pet. II. 1—12.

1 PETER II. 1.

WHEREFORE, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypo-

1 PETER II. 1.

I HAVE been reminding you of the everlasting permanency and invariable certainty of the word of God; let this, *therefore*, engage you to pay it a becoming regard; and *laying aside* SECT. iii. 1 Peter II. 1.

SECT. iii.

all malignity, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and envies, and all evil speakings, which are so contrary to its benevolent design, With all simplicity, *as new-born infants*[a], who are regenerated by Divine grace, *desire* that spiritual nourishment, *that rational and unmingled milk*, if I may so call it; *that* so *ye may grow thereby* to a state of adult Christianity. And this may reasonably be expected of you, *since you have* so experimentally felt and *tasted that the Lord [is] gracious*[b], since you have known the sweetness there is in Christ, and how suitable he is to the necessities and desires of an awakened sinner; *To whom coming [as to] a living stone*, who is capable of diffusing spiritual life into those who are united to him, though *disallowed indeed* and rejected *of men, yet chosen of God, [and]* inexpressibly *precious* and valuable; *Ye also as living stones*, united to him, and deriving life from him, *are built up* as *a spiritual house*, consecrated to his service; and in another view, ye may be considered as *a holy priesthood*, destined *to offer up* the *spiritual sacrifices* of prayer, praise and obedience, which are all *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, who is the great High Priest over the house of God, whose intercession alone can recommend to the Father such imperfect services as ours. *Therefore it is contained in* a well-known passage of *the scripture*, (Isaiah xxviii. 16,) *Behold I lay in Sion* a stone, even *a chief corner-stone, chosen, precious; and he that confideth in it, shall not be ashamed:* which words undoubtedly refer to the Messiah, as the great hope and confidence of his church. *To you therefore who believe, [it is] precious*[c]: you, who rest your salvation on this corner-stone, know by blessed experience its value, as infinitely beyond all that can be compared with it. *But as for those who are disobedient*, these words of the Psalmist are accomplished with regard to them, and may well be recollected in the present connection, (Psalm cxviii. 22,) *The stone which*

hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings,

1 Peter II. 2. 2 As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious,

5 Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe, *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which

a *New-born infants.*] This expression very emphatically denotes those who are *newly converted* or *regenerated.*—*Wolfius* observes, (*Curæ Philol.* Vol. V. p. 105,) that the *Jewish rabbies* were wont to stile new *proselytes* to their religion, *little children* and *new-born babes.*

b *Since you have tasted,* &c.] This is the proper rendering of ειπερ, and not, according to our translation, *if so be.* See *Blackwall's Sacred Class.* Vol. II. p. 203.

c *It is precious.*] τιμη, *Preciousness itself.*

d *They*

which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner:

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner; all their opposition to it is in vain: they can never pretend to prevent the honour to which it is destined in the Divine purpose; *And* to themselves, it is also, as Isaiah expresses it in the preceding context, *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence;* they who would attempt, as it were, to remove it out of the way, find it an over-match for their strength, and are dashed in pieces by it. *They being disobedient* to the Divine revelation, *stumble at the word*[d] of the gospel, which contains this awful testimony, and bring inevitable ruin upon themselves; *to which also they were appointed* by the righteous sentence of God long before, even as early as in his first purpose and decree he ordained his Son to be the great Foundation of his church. *But you,* on the contrary, who unfeignedly believe in him, [*are*] *a chosen generation*[e], *a royal priesthood,* who bear at once the dignity of kings, and sanctity of priests: *a holy nation,* set apart in a special manner for the service of God; and *a peculiar people.* When these titles were given to Israel of old, it was in an inferior sense; and it is in a much nobler signification, that these words may be applied to you. Consider it therefore as the wise intention of Divine Providence, *that you should declare* and proclaim all abroad, *the virtues*[f] *of him who has called you out of* that *darkness,* in which you originally were, *into his marvellous* and glorious *light*[g]; that clear light of the gospel, which opens so many illustrious scenes of Divine wonders.

SECT. iii.

1 Peter II. 7.

8

9

d *They being disobedient, stumble,* &c.] A learned writer, I think, very well observes, that it is doing *violence* to the *text,* to read it as *one continued* sentence, as it is in our translation. The truth is, the *apostle* runs a double *antithesis* between believers and unbelievers: υμιν μεν—απειθουσιν, saith he, *To you who believe, it is precious:* απειθησι δε, *but to them who are disobedient,* and unbelievers, *a stone of stumbling:* οι προσκοπτουσι, *they stumble:* υμεις δε, *but you are a chosen people,* &c. See *Taylor's Key to the Romans,* § 71.

e *Ye are a chosen generation.*] Dr. Whitby shews at large that the phrase of *God's chosen* is applied to the *whole* nation of the Jews, good and bad, and not to those among them who might be supposed *elected to eternal life.* But it seems very unreasonable to limit such phrases as these when applied to Christians just to the idea, which the like phrases had, when applied to the Jews.

f *The virtues.*] We render it *praises;* but the word αρετας, is well known *commonly* to have the signification here assigned it.

g *Marvellous* and glorious *light.*] A most *beautiful* expression of the *wonders* the *gospel* opens on the *enlightened* eye. But perhaps no interpretation was ever more unnatural and servile to an *hypothesis* than that which the author of *Miscellanea Sacra* gives to these words, when he explains their being *called out of darkness,* by their being first made *proselytes of the gate* from their state of heathen idolatry, and then being brought into the *marvellous light* of the Christian *religion. Miscel. Sacra.* Vol. II. p. 85.

SECT. iii.

ders. To this, are you, my brethren called, *who once* [*were*] *not a people, but* [*are*] *now the people of God*[h]; *who had not obtained mercy;* who, many of you, lay in the ruins of the Gentile world, *but have now obtained mercy*, and are gathered into the church of God, and by his favour entitled to all its privileges. My *beloved* brethren, let it be your special care to walk worthy of these privileges; and that you may, *I beseech* [*you*] *as strangers* in this world, *and sojourners* in the body, who are to be here but for a very little space of time, and must soon quit this state of mortality to dwell in another world, *that ye abstain from carnal lusts*, in the gratification of which, only a very mean and transient pleasure is to be found: for these are appetites which are suited only to that part of our nature, which so soon is to be laid down, and *which* do indeed *make war against* the nobler powers of *the* immortal *soul*, and have a tendency, not only to injure, but for ever to ruin it, if they are suffered to prevail and govern; *Having your conversation honest*, fair, and honourable *among the Gentiles*, particularly in an exemplary discharge of all social and relative duties; *that whereas they speak against you, as evil doers*, in separating from the worship of their gods, and joining yourselves with what they presumptuously call the impious sect of Christians, *they*, *being eye-witnesses* continually *of* [*your*] *good works*, may not only lay aside these blasphemous reproaches, but exchange them for commendations and praises; and so *may glorify God in the day of* [*their*] *visitation*, during the season in which the gospel is preached among them, whereby they are visited with the offers of pardon and salvation.

1 Peter ii. 10.

10 Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul:

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us examine our own hearts seriously and impartially, with respect to those branches of the *Christian* temper, and those views of the Christian life, which are exhibited in this excellent portion of holy writ. Let us, especially, enquire, in what manner, and to

h *Were not a people.*] I think it plain that Hosea ii. 23, (to which there seems here to be a reference) relates to the Israelites after their *rejection*. But it may with so much propriety be *accommodated* to the Gentiles, that I thought it much better to give it such a turn, than to suppose it here spoken only of Jewish converts.

to what purposes we receive *the word of God?* Is it with the simplicity *of babes, or children?* do we desire it, as *they* desire the *breast?* do we lay aside those *evil affections* of mind, which would incapicitate us for receiving it in a becoming manner? And does it conduce *to our spiritual nourishment*, and *growth* in grace? have we indeed *tasted that the Lord is gracious?* do we experimentally know, that to the *true believer* the Redeemer is inestimably *precious?* have we indeed *come to him, as the living stone;* and notwithstanding all *the neglect and contempt* with which he may be treated by many infatuated and miserable men, by wretches who are bent on their own destruction, do we regard, and build on him as our great and only *foundation?* and do we feel that *spiritual life* diffused through our souls, which is the genuine consequence of a real and vital union with him?—If these be our happy circumstances, we shall never *be ashamed or confounded:* for this is that *foundation which God hath laid in Zion;* and the united efforts of earth and hell to raze or overturn it, will be scattered as chaff and stubble, and by the breath of God be rendered utterly vain and ineffectual.

SECT. iii.

Ver. 2 1 3 4 6 8,

Are we conscious of our high *dignity*, as we are *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people?* are our hearts suitably affected with a sense of the Divine *goodness*, in calling us *to be a people*, who once were *not a people;* and us *beloved*, who were *not beloved*; in leading us from the deplorable *darkness of ignorance and vice*, in which our *ancestors* were involved, into the *marvellous light of the gospel*; yea, in dissipating those thick clouds of prejudice and error, which once veiled this sacred light from our eyes, that its enlivening beams might break in upon our souls! And are we now *shewing forth his praises?* are we now *offering to him spiritual sacrifice*, in humble dependence on *Christ*, our great *High Priest*, who continually intercedes for our *acceptance with God?* Then shall we indeed *make our calling and our election sure*, and shall ere long appear in his heavenly temple, both as *kings and priests unto God* to participate of our Redeemer's glory, to reign with him, and minister to him for ever.

9, 10

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Let us be careful, in the mean time, to remember, that we are *strangers and sojourners on earth, as all our fathers were;* and that our days in this transitory life are but *as a shadow* that declineth; and let us learn to regard the appetites of our animal nature, and the interest of this mortal life, with a noble superiority; reflecting for how little a space of time they will solicit our attention. *And as for fleshly lusts*, let us consider them *as making war against the soul;* arming ourselves with that resolution and fortitude which is necessary to prevent their gaining *a victory over us;* which would be, at once, *our disgrace and our ruin.* There

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is

SECT. iii. is an additional argument to be derived, for a strenuous *opposition* to them, for our circumstances and situations in the present Ver. 12 world, where there are so many enemies to our holy religion, who cannot be more effectually *silenced than by our good conversation.* Let it be, therefore, our principal care to cut off from them *the occasion of speaking against us as evil-doers;* and by exhibiting a clear and unexceptionable pattern of *good works* in our daily conversation, let us invite and allure them to *improve the day of their visitation, and glorify their father who is in heaven.*

SECT. IV.

In order to adorn the gospel, the Apostle urges upon them the exercise of a due care as to relative duties; and particularly a subjection to civil governors, and to masters, even where their dispositions or injunctions might be harsh and severe; enforcing all by the consideration of that patience with which our Lord Jesus Christ endured his most grievous sufferings. 1 Pet. II. 13, *to the end.*

1 PETER II. 13.

SECT. iv. HAVING been already urging you to set a good example before those who are without; for the further illustration of that general 1 Peter II. 13. precept, let me exhort you to be particularly careful to *be subject to every human constitution*[a] of government, under which you are providentially placed, *for the Lord's sake*, and that ye may not bring any reflection upon the religion of Jesus; *whether it be to the king* or emperor, 14 *as supreme:* *Or* whether it be *to governors* and presidents, *as sent* and commissioned *by him* from Rome, *in order to the punishment of evil-doers*[b] *but to the praise of them who do well:* for this is indeed the true intent of magistracy, and this will be the care of them who rightly understand the nature and honour of their office. For

1 PETER II. 13.

SUBMIT yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

a *Every human constitution.*] The whole course of the *apostle's* reasoning in this place so plainly shows how very impertinent it is to apply this to the injunctions *of men* in matters of *religion*, that one cannot but wonder that any *rational* writer should ever have mentioned the *argument* which has been drawn from it.

b *In order to the punishment of evil-doers.*] The Roman governors had the power of *life and death* in such *conquered* provinces as those mentioned, chap. i. 1. There is therefore, the exactest propriety in the stile, as Dr. Lardner hath observed, *Credib.* Vol. I. p. 167.

c *The*

15 For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

16 As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 For this *is* thankworthy

For so is the will of God in this respect, *that by doing good ye should bridle in the ignorance of foolish men* [c], which might be ready to cast reflections upon you. *As* those who are indeed in the noblest sense *free*, in consequence of your relation to Christ, and your share in the purchase of his blood, *yet not using your liberty as a veil* and covering for the practice *of wickedness*, as the Jews too often do; *but* behaving continually *as* becomes *the servants of God*, as those who are now more than ever his property in consequence of your having been bought with such a price. *Honour all men;* maintain an esteem for human nature in general, and observe with pleasure whatever is truly honourable in the meanest and most undeserving of mankind. *Love the* Christian *brotherhood* with a peculiar and distinguishing affection, suitable to that fraternal relation into which you are brought by your joint adoption into the family of God, and insertion into the body of Christ. *Reverence God* [d] at all times with the sincerest and profoundest humility; and let a sense of the honour and favour he has conferred upon you increase, rather than diminish that reverence. *Honour the king* whom God hath set over you, and all the subordinate governors who derive their authority from him; paying obedience to all their just commands, and taking heed that there be nothing rebellious or factious in your behaviour, which would turn to the hurt of society, and bring a reflection upon your holy profession. *Ye* who are *domestic servants* and slaves *be in subjection to* [*your own*] *masters* in all things lawful, *with all reverence* and submission; and remember to pay this regard *not only to the good and the gentle*, whose moderation, clemency, and benevolence make your yoke easy; *but also the froward* and perverse. *For this* [*is*] *graceful* indeed, and deserves applause; *if any one for the sake of conscience*

SECT. iv.

1 Peter II. 15.

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c *The ignorance of foolish men.*] By the *foolish men* here spoken of, Dr. Whitby understands the heathens, who might be ready *foolishly* to judge of Christians by the behaviour of the turbulent Jews, and so might represent them as a people naturally *averse* from subjection to kings, as Josephus says of his own nation.

d *Reverence God, &c.*] Perhaps no finer and stronger instances of the *Laconic stile*, are to be found any where than in this place. It is remarkable that they are required to *honour the emperor*, though so great a persecutor, and of so abandoned a character, as Nero himself.

e *If*

SECT. iv.

science towards God, and a desire of performing his duty to him, patiently *endures grief* and sorrow, *though he suffer unjustly:* *For* after all,
1 Peter ii. 20. *what glory* [*is it,*] or what can you possibly value yourselves upon, *if when you have committed an offence, and are buffeted* and corrected for it, *ye endure* [*it?*] How can you indeed do otherwise? or if you could, how shameful were it in such a case, to rise against the hand of your injured masters? *But if when you have done good and yet suffer* through their tyranny and perverseness, *ye endure* [*it*] meekly and patiently, *this* [*is*] acceptable and *graceful before God*[e]; his eye, which always judges of the true beauty of characters aright, is even delighted with such a spectacle, though exhibited in the lowest rank
21 of human life. And I would particularly urge this meek and patient temper upon you; *for to this you were called*, when you were brought into the profession of the Christian faith; *because Christ himself*[f], pure and spotless as he was, *suffered* not only buffetings and stripes, but deep and mortal wounds, *for you, leaving you*[g], *an example* and copy, *that you might* with certainty trace, and with constancy and diligence *follow his footsteps*, and by observing them as his, be charmed to an imitation, even where it was most
22 difficult and painful. We cannot expect indeed to arrive at a perfect resemblance of it; but let us endeavour to approach as near as possible, even to the amiable character of him, *who did no sin, neither was* any degree of *deceit found*
23 *in his mouth; Who being reviled, reviled not again*, and *suffering* the most grievous insults and injuries, *threatened not* the vengeance which he had it in his power to have executed; *but committed* [*himself*] *to him who judgeth righteously*, and who in his own most proper time will make the righteous and innocent
24 triumphant over all their enemies. Yet we know this spotless and Holy Person, was as much distinguished by the grievousness of his sufferings, as by the integrity of his character. For

worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

20 For what glory *is it*, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, this *is* acceptable with God.

21 For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

23 Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we

e *If when ye have done good, and yet suffer, ye endure* [*it,*] *this* [*is*] *graceful before God.*] The *emperor Antoninus* quotes it as an excellent saying of *Antisthenes, that it is truly royal to do good, and to be reproached, Ant. Med.* L. vii. § 36.

f *Because Christ himself, &c.*] It is observable, that upon the mention of the name of Christ, the apostle falls into a noble and animated *digression* of several verses, to the end of the chapter; afterwards he continues to pursue his exhortation to *relative duties.*

g *Suffered for you, leaving you, &c.*] I here prefer the reading of the Alexandrian and other MSS. as most agreeable to the sense and connection.

h *That*

we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

For it is He, *who himself bore* the punishment of *our sins in his own body*, when he hung in the agonies of crucifixion *on the* accursed *tree; that we being freed from* the guilt of our *sins*[h], and the misery to which they exposed us, *might live unto righteousness: by whose stripes* and bruises *ye are healed*[i] of evils infinitely greater than the cruelty of the severest masters can bring upon you; according to the well-known phrase of the prophet, (Isaiah liii. 4, 5, 6.) *For ye were like sheep going astray*, exposed to want and danger, and wandering in the way to destruction; *but now ye are* by Divine grace recovered, and *turned again to* him who bears the important and tender character of *the* great *Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*[k], who has graciously received you under his pastoral care, and will maintain that inspection over you which shall be your continued security from returning to those fatal wanderings; and the sense of this may cheer and comfort you under any oppression or injuries to which you may be exposed.

SECT. iv.

1 Peter II. 24.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

25

IMPROVEMENT.

As the *honour of God* is eminently concerned in the regard shewn by his people to their *relative duties*, let us out of a due respect to *that*, pay a very careful and diligent attention to *them*; that *the ignorance of foolish men*, of those who reproach our good conversation in Christ, may be utterly silenced. Let *magistrates* especially be reverenced, and in all things lawful, obeyed. And if *they* desire to secure reverence to their persons and authority, let them remember the end and design of their office, namely, *to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise* and encouragement to the *regular* and *virtuous*. And let *us*, who rejoice in our liberty, *that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free*, be very careful, that it be

Ver. 13--18

15

13, 14

h *That being freed from sin: ταις αμαρτιαις αποτενομενοι.*] That our *common translation* is agreeable to the frequent signification of the *original word*, is certain. But so is the version I have chosen, which is approved by Beza, and is preferred and adopted by that judicious and learned critic Erasmus Schimidius.

i *By whose stripes*, &c.] Mr. *Cradoc* supposes the meaning of this is, as if he had said, The blood of Christ, by which your souls are saved, may be a sufficient balm for those *wounds* and *bruises* which your cruel masters may inflict upon you; that is, it may so delight your minds as to raise you above an undue regard to and concern about such *corporeal* sufferings. *Apost. Hist.* p. 407. 23

k *Bishop of your souls.*] This is an instance of that *duplicity* of design which is often to be found in the *epistles*. The *apostle* urges these things peculiarly upon *servants*: yet does it in *general* language, as well knowing that many of them were the concerns of all Christian readers.

SECT. iv. be not *abused as a cloke of licentiousness;* but as we would manifest our *fear* and reverence *of God*, let us remember to *honour the*
16 *king;* yea, to render every man, and every station and character,
17 the esteem and respect which he justly claims; feeling at the same time, the constraints of a *peculiar* affection to all those who are united to us by the endearing character of our *brethren in the Lord.*—Should men who fill *superior stations* and *relations* in life, not be so regular, and without exception, in their private and
18 public deportment as they ought, let us perform *our duty*, not only to the *gentle* and *obliging*, but to the *perverse* and *froward;* remembering our *Lord's example*, which was set before us *that we*
21 *might follow his steps.* And let his marvellous *love* in *bearing our*
24 *sins in his own* sacred *body on the tree*, endear both his example and his precepts to our souls, and constrain us to a holy conformity to him.

Since he who is the great *Shepherd and Bishop of souls*, came on the most gracious and condescending errand of *seeking and saving that which was lost, of gathering us* into his fold, who were
25 *wandering* in the way to perdition; let us shew so much gratitude and wisdom, as not to *wander* any more; but as we regard our security and our very life, let us keep our *Shepherd* in our eye, submit ourselves to his pastoral inspection, and chearfully follow him, in whatsoever path he shall condescend to conduct us.

SECT. V.

Christian wives are exhorted to submit themselves to their husbands, and to study the ornaments of their minds, rather than of their persons; and likewise husbands are exhorted to treat their wives in a becoming and honourable manner, from a tender sense of those infirmities to which the sex is peculiarly liable. 1 Pet. III. 1—7.

SECT. v.

1 Peter III. 1.

I HAVE been discoursing of the duty of a servant; let me now *likewise* consider those of some other relations; and particularly urge it upon you, O *ye* Christian *wives*, that ye [*be*] *in subjection to your own husbands*, in all things just and lawful; *that if any* of them be *disobedient to the word* of the gospel, and have refused to yield to all the other mighty arguments by which Christianity is supported, *they may, without* attending upon *the word, be gained over*, to the love and practice of it, *by the* amiable and
2 edifying *deportment of* [*their*] *wives:* Particularly,

1 Peter III. 1.

LIKEWISE, ye wives *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives,

2 While they behold your

your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear:

larly, *beholding your chaste* and spotless *conversation, in the fear* of God, and with a due reverence to your husbands, for his sake, and not merely on constraint. Be careful to behave in every respect as becomes those *whose* happiness it is to be acquainted with the great principles of Christianity; and particularly consider, how they should influence your conduct in the *adorning* of your persons [a]. And as to this, *let it not be* merely *external* [b], nor consist *in the plaiting* and braiding *the hair*, or *in putting on* chains of *gold* about the neck, or earrings, or bracelets of gold on the arms, *or in wearing of* sumptuous and splendid *apparel: But* let your ornament be of a much more glorious nature; let it consist in a well-regulated temper of mind, in having *the hidden man of the heart* rightly formed: let it be seated *in what is* more *incorruptible* by far than gold, or gems, which, stable as they are, may in time wear away, and are liable to a variety of accidents; I mean, in the beautiful and harmonious disposition of *a meek and quiet spirit*, silently submitting to the conduct of your husbands, and gently accommodating yourselves to them as far as reasonably you can; *which* argues an inward wisdom and goodness, that *is highly precious in the sight of God* himself; who looks with comparative contempt on those little artifices by which the notice of vain men is often attracted. This has long been the prevailing fashion in God's family; *for so the holy women also, who hoped in God*, and served him in the integrity of their hearts, *long since, adorned themselves, being*, agreeably to the exhortations I have been giving you, *in subjection to their own husbands: As* you may particularly recollect in the instance of *Sarah*, who you know *obeyed Abraham* her husband, *calling him* constantly, when she spoke of him, her *lord*, though she was

SECT. V.

1 Peter III. 3.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God great price.

5 For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands;

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daugh-

[a] *Whose adorning*, &c.] *Plutarch* quotes a passage from *Crates*, in which he observes, in words greatly resembling these, "That neither gold, nor emeralds, nor pearls give *grace* and *ornament* to a *woman*; but all those things, which clearly express, and set off her *gravity, regularity*, and *modesty*." *Præcept. Cong.* p. 86. But St. Peter's precept is enriched with a variety of much *more noble* and *agreeable* thoughts; especially when recommending *virtue* as the *ornament of the hidden man, incorruptible*, and *precious in the sight of God*, the truest judge of beauty and perfection.

[b] *Let it not be*, &c.] This is not to be interpreted as absolutely *prohibiting* the ornaments of dress, but only the making these things our *chief* concern. Compare John vi. 27; with 1 Tim. v. 8.

SECT. V.

1 Peter III. 6.

was not only of the same family with him, but was herself in so peculiar a manner dignified by God, and had her name changed in token of her being a mother of many nations, and of the veneration in which she was to be held in all succeeding ages. Remember therefore the character of this excellent woman, whom those of you, who are of Jewish extraction, are so fond of calling your mother; and *whose daughters you* indeed *are, so long as ye do well, and* preserving, by such a conduct, your inward tranquillity and fortitude, *are not* meanly *terrified*, so as to act out of character, *with any amazement*[c], or danger, which may meet you in the way of your duty. The want of a becoming and necessary fortitude in this case, would indeed be attended with fatal consequences, and render you unworthy of so honourable a title. And that the duty of the wife may be rendered more easy and agreeable, and *ye husbands* may have more reason to expect it to be chearfully performed, let it be your care *likewise* that ye *dwell with* [*your wives*] *according to knowledge*, and in such a manner as becomes those who have been instructed in that great system of wisdom and duty, the gospel of Christ. And particularly be careful so to order your affairs, that you may not be prevented from *allotting an honourable* and comfortable *subsistence to the women*[d]; for this is a piece of respect which is due to the tenderness and infirmity of her sex, *as* being upon the whole *the weaker vessel*, less able to endure the

daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto

c *Not terrified with any amazement.*] Many have apprehended this *last clause* is suggested as an *argument* to persuade them to *do well*, that they would be preserved from those *alarms* and *terrors* which a perverse and rebellious contest with *superior* power might bring along with it, and which would indeed prove as injurious to their *peace* as to their *character*. But the structure of the *Greek sentence* makes it evident, that he speaks of the *condition* on which they were to preserve the characters of *daughters of Sarah*. Possibly the *apostle* might have in his mind the instance in which Sarah acted beneath her *usual* character, when through fear and sudden *amazement* she denied her having *laughed*. Gen. xviii. 15. And if he had, it is the design of this sentence to intimate, that though in that instance she *failed* she *generally* acted in a very different manner: but as the hint is very *oblique*, I choose not to express it very strongly in the *paraphrase*, though I have indeed glanced upon it.

d *Allotting an honourable subsistence to the woman.*] The *reader* may see a very *different*, and truly I think, a very *unjustifiable* interpretation of these words in Dr. Whitby; which I shall not so much as transcribe.—It is to be remembered, that many of the Christians were persons of *low rank* in life; which might make such a precept of *maintaining their wives decently*, and not subjecting them to *harder* labour than they could bear, (which they might be tempted to do from their indigent circumstances,) exceeding proper. The *sense* of the word τιμη, (as signifying *subsistence* or *maintenance*,) is so much confirmed by 1 Tim. v. 17, that I think I need say no more to *vindicate* it.

e *That*

unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

the fatigue of labour, and subject to various indispositions which peculiarly require succour and accommodation. See therefore that this duty be properly and carefully performed, that your hearts may be endeared to each other; *and* upon the whole, converse together, *as* [*those who are*] *joint heirs of the grace of* eternal *life*, and are solicitous, that your behaviour may be correspondent to so exalted a hope, and may be so ordered in every respect, *that your* joint *prayers may not be hindered*[e], nor the pleasures of devotion impaired by any secret alienation of heart, but rather be increased by the strictest union and sincerest affection.

SECT. V.

1 Peter III. 7.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us observe with a pleasing attention, how greatly solicitous all the *apostles* are, not only to establish the *doctrines* of Christianity, but to inculcate its *precepts*; particularly those, which refer to the *relative duties* of life. The comprehensive argument by which St. Peter enforces those of *one* peculiar relation, may be considered also as enforcing *all the rest*; I mean, the tendency of our exemplary behaviour, *to win over those who are without the word*, or *are disobedient to it*. In this manner let us all plead the cause of our *Lord and Master*. And this silent, this winning eloquence will, by the Divine blessing, be powerful and effectual.— The veil of *modesty* is decent in *all*, and an humble caution, and fear of offending, are to be considered as duties of *universal* obligation. But if the *weaker sex* are commanded to aim at a noble superiority to the concerns of this *animal* life, and to the parade and vanity of *dress*, it may with greater reason be expected from *men*, who boast of their superior understanding and larger experience. *They*, not only from Christian humility, but, one would think, even from a *manly pride*, should be raised above such childish ornaments, in contriving and adjusting which, many who are stiled rational creatures, spend much too large a portion of their *precious time*, and for the sake of which they neglect the cultivation and embellishment of their intelligent and immortal part, and the securing a happiness that will never have an end: as if glittering in the eyes of our *fellow-worms* were so desirable a thing, that it were worth while, for the sake of it, to expose ourselves to *condemnation from*

Ver. 1 2 3 4 4

e *That your prayers may not be hindered.*] These words seem strongly to intimate the great *importance* of *social prayer*; as, when we shortly expect to unite in acts of *domestic devotion*, a concern not to be notoriously *unfit* for it, will be a *guard* upon our general behaviour.

SECT. V. *from God!* Let *the hidden man of the heart* be more our care; and when *that* is rightly governed, the proper conduct of our *external* behaviour will be natural and easy.

Ver. 7 Let us labour to walk *according to knowledge*, to behave as those who have been well instructed in the science of the gospel, in comparison of which all other sciences are *ignorance* and *vanity*. Let us be ready to make allowance for the *natural infirmities* of those about us. Especially, let *husbands* consider *those* of their *wives*, (not as an encouragement to *oppression*, than which nothing could be more ungenerous, but) as an engagement in all honour and conscience, to a *tender* and *respectful* behaviour. How becoming and amiable is such conduct in those who through Divine grace are *heirs of eternal life!* And if a due care be not maintained on this head, there will be an indisposition for *social* and for *secret prayer;* and when the pleasures of *devotion* are destroyed or embittered, it is not to be expected any *other kind* of pleasure, worth the regard of a *rational* creature, can long continue.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle urges various arguments on the Christian converts, to engage them to an inoffensive, benevolent, and useful life and conversation, and to a steady courageous adherence to their religion amidst all opposition. 1 Pet. III. 8—17.

1 PETER III. 8.

SECT. VI. *TO conclude* this head; my brethren, [*be*] *all unanimous*, guarding against all unnecessary occasion of contention; be *sympathizing*,

1 Peter III. 8. *full of brotherly love* to all Christians, *compassionate* to those that are in distress, and *friendly* to

9 all those that need your assistance; *Not returning evil for evil, nor reproach for reproach; but on the contrary*, rather *blessing*, even to those that curse you, according to our Lord's precept; *knowing that to this purpose ye were called* to the profession of Christianity, *that ye might inherit a blessing* immense and eternal; the expectation of which, (considering its infinite importance,) may well keep your spirits calm and composed, whatever be the injury and ill-usage you may

10 meet with from your fellow-men. *For* this you know is the language of the Psalmist, and it ought never to be forgotten, (Psal. xxxiv. 12, 13,)

1 PETER III. 8.

FINALLY, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days,

days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and *be* ready always

13,) What man is *he that would love life*[a], in the truest sense of loving and enjoying it, *and* would *see good*, prosperous, and happy *days? let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit: Let him turn away from* 11 the practice of all that is *evil, and do good* to the utmost extent of his power; *let him seek* after *peace, and* resolutely *pursue it*, even though it may appear to fly away from him. *For the* 12 favourable *eyes of the Lord* [*are*] continually set *upon the righteous*, to watch over and protect them; *and his ears* [*are*] ever [*open*] to listen *to* the voice of *their supplications; but the face of the Lord*, his countenance full of wrath and resentment, [*is*] set *against them that do evil;* insomuch that he will even blot out their names from the book of the living, and cause their remembrance to perish from the earth. These are the things which on the one hand may be hoped for, and on the other, dreaded as the consequence of practising, or neglecting religion.

And now reflect with yourselves, *who shall* 13 *hurt you?* who shall have the ability, or inclination to hurt you, *if ye imitate him who is* supremely *good*, if you copy after the benevolence of the Divine Being, and of your great Master, whose whole life was so illustrious an example of the most diffusive generosity and goodness to his followers? *But if you should suffer on ac-* 14 *count of righteousness*, [*ye are*] still *happy* in spite of all the malicious and outrageous efforts of your enemies to render you miserable: *therefore fear not their terror*[b], *neither be troubled*, as they are, under the various calamities of life, who are, alas! utterly destitute of your support. *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts;* behave 15 towards him continually with that reverence, with that dutiful and obedient regard, which his unrivalled perfections and glories demand; *and* [*be*] *always prepared*, by a ready and familiar acquaintance with the contents and evidences of your holy religion, and by that cheerfulness and

SECT. vi.

1 Peter III. 10.

a *He that would love life, &c.*] The *apostle* here urges in favour of the *virtues* he recommends, that by these the *comforts* of life will be secured, ver. 10, 11; the *favour of God* engaged, ver. 12; and the *malice of men* in a great measure disarmed, ver. 13, &c. And these three arguments are indeed of very great weight and importance.

b *Fear not their terror.*] Mr. *Joseph Mede* understands it, as if he had said, Fear not the Jew, nor the Gentile; but sanctify, reverence, and worship the *one living God. Diater.* on Luke xi. 2. But I think the interpretation given in the *pharaphrase* is much more *natural.*

c *That*

SECT. VI.

and presence of mind which arises from a consciousness of your practical regard to it, *to* [*offer*] *an apology to every one that demands of you an account of the* exalted *hope which is in you*, and which enabled you to maintain such serenity and composure, under those troubles and persecutions to which the profession of Christianity may expose you. And that this noble defence may be rendered the more effectual, let it be made *with meekness and reverence;* the good fruit of your religious principles appearing in the piety and gentleness of your minds.

1 Peter III. 15. always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

16 Let it be your constant endeavour, that, *having a good conscience*, you be always bold and courageous in the defence of that system of religion which gives to such a conscience so mighty and stable a support; *that wherein they*, who bitterly oppose your religion, *speak against you as evil-doers*, and lay to your charge crimes of the most detestable nature, *they may be ashamed*[c]; they, I say, *who revile your good*, inoffensive, and useful *conversation in* the profession of that religion which brings you into such an intimate

16 Having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 relation to *Christ*. *For* [*it is*] certainly *better to suffer*, (*if it be the will of God*, that you should suffer,) *for doing good, than for doing evil;* the testimony of a good conscience, and the sense of the Divine favour, affording the noblest supports in the former case; whereas in the latter, the severest torments that can be endured, are those which the guilty mind inflicts upon itself: to which we may add, that while we suffer for the truth, we have the pleasure of reflecting, that we follow our blessed Redeemer; and this is another most powerful source of consolation, of which I shall presently have occasion to discourse more particularly and largely.

17 For *it is* better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

IMPROVEMENT.

How very astonishing, and lamentable is it, that when the way to happiness is so plainly delineated, so few should find it!

c *That wherein they speak against you, they may be ashamed.*] I think this remarkably illustrated by the strain of that *epistle* of Pliny, in which he gives an account of *his own conduct*, in persecuting the Christians; by which it plainly appears that he was *ashamed* of what the *laws* required, when he considered how *inoffensive* their behaviour was.

it! *What man is there, who does not desire life, and love many days*, in which *he may see good?* Yet how few *tongues* are kept *from evil*, how few *lips from speaking guile?* How few *decline from evil, and do good!* How few *seek peace, and pursue it!* On the contrary, how much low cunning and artifice, and what discords and contentions reign among mankind! And they often issue in those bloody *wars and fightings*, which arise from *those lusts that war in our members.* How detestable, and how miserable, do these perverse and ungovernable passions render us! How sadly do they prevent the *ascent* of our *prayers to God*, and the *descent* of his *mercies upon us!* Mercies, which he is ever ready to impart to those who are meet and disposed to receive them.

SECT. VI.

Verse 10, 11

There is notwithstanding a *little remnant, who are righteous before him;* and of them *his gracious eye* is continually directed for their *good; to their cry*, yea to the soft whispers of their supplications, *his ears are ever open.* Honoured and happy above all the children of men are they who have the favour and the attention of the great Sovereign of the universe. Who *will be able to hurt* or injure them, should they have malignity enough *to wish and attempt it?* And as this loving-kindness of the Lord is thus productive of security and happiness to his people, let it engage us to be *followers and imitators of him, who is supremely good.* We may then face all the menaces of a frowning world *with an holy intrepidity, and sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, making him our fear, and our dread*, we need not have any terrible apprehensions of what men or devils can do unto us. Yea, we shall in that case, not only have nothing to *fear*, but every thing to *hope*, which can conduce to our real and everlasting felicity. Encouraged by these important considerations, let it be our care in the fear of God, to study and endeavour clearly to understand *the foundations of our religion*, and of our glorious *hope*, that we may be able to *defend* it against every attack, however formidable, *and to give an account of our hope to all who shall demand it*, in sweet harmony and complacency of soul, undisturbed with the disquietude, and untainted with the example, *of those who render for evil for evil, and railing for railing.* On the contrary, let us greatly triumph over *all ill usage, by repaying it with good;* and may a sense of *that important blessing*, which by the gospel we are *called to inherit*, diffuse *that pleasure and happiness*, through our whole souls, which may carry them above the resentment of the little injuries we receive from the *unkindness of men*, and dispose us to every genuine expression of that unlimited benevolence, which should fill and expand the

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14, 15

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8

hearts of those who are thus feasted with the Divinest hopes and consolations.

SECT. VII.

The Apostle Peter urges on the Christian converts the atonement, resurrection, and exaltation of their Divine Saviour, the obligation of their baptismal covenant, and the awful solemnity of the last judgment, to engage them to a life of Christian mortification and holiness, whatever opposition they might be called to encounter. 1 Pet. III. 18—IV. 6.

1 PETER III. 18.

SECT. VII.

1 Peter III. 18.

I HAVE already observed, that if it be the will of God you should suffer, it is better it should be for doing well than for doing evil; and it is very evidently so, *because* hereby we are made conformable to *Christ* our Head and Leader, whom it cannot but be our glory and happiness to resemble; for he *also once suffered for sins*[a], he, who was so eminently, and perfectly *the just*, suffered *for the unjust*, for our benefit, and in our stead, *that he might introduce us to God*, and fix us in a state of acceptance and favourable intercourse with him, *being indeed put to death in the flesh*, by those enemies whom God permitted for a while to triumph over him; *but quickened by the spirit* of God[b], which soon re-animated his body, and
19 raised it to an immortal life: Even that Spirit, *by* the inspiration of *which* granted to his faithful servant Noah, *going forth*, as it were in that progress in which he employed him, *he preached to* those notorious sinners, who for their disobedience, have since experienced the just severity of *the* Divine vengeance, and are now in the condition of separate *spirits*, reserved, as it were, *in prison*[c], to the severer judgment at the

1 PETER III. 18.

FOR Christ also hath once suffered for sins the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

a *Because Christ also once suffered*, &c.] The following *section*, though it seems a kind of *digression* occasioned by the apostle's mentioning the name of his blessed *Master*, yet is, in the main, properly connected with his purpose of *animating* them under their sufferings.

b *Quickened by the Spirit.*] Dr. More renders it, *remaining alive in the spirit*, and urges it as an argument against the *sleep of the soul.* More's Theol. Works, p. 17.

c *The spirits in prison.*] Hardly any text has been more *differently* interpreted than this. Some understand it of *souls* who were in some *lower place* in paradise, εν φυλακη, or in a *watch-tower*, where they were waiting the Redeemer's coming; others

SECT. vii.

1 Peter III. 20.

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

the great day. I speak of those, *who were long since disobedient, when once the* abused and insulted *long-suffering of* a compassionate *God waited* upon them, *in the days of* the patriarch *Noah*, during the succession of one hundred and twenty years, *while the ark was preparing; in which few, that is, eight souls*, of Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives, *were carried safely through the water* [d], in which the residue of mankind perished.

21 The like figure whereunto *even* baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

21 *The antitype to which* [e], (or that which corresponds to, and was figured by it, that is, by the preservation of Noah's family in the ark,) *does now save us*, or is the instrument of our safety and preservation, as the ark was of theirs; [*I mean baptism*] whereby we are received into the Christian church, and numbered amongst the heirs of salvation; but then it is to be remembered, that it is *not* merely *the putting away the pollution of the flesh* by the use of material water, for that would be very insignificant; *but the answer of a good conscience* [f], the reply that it makes when interrogated *in the presence of God*, and

others of those *in hell*, whom he delivered, to grace his triumph. See Dr. *More's Theolog. Works*, p. 18. Bishop *Pearson on the Creed*, p. 228. Lord Barrington understands it of Noah's preaching to his own family, shut up with him in the *ark*, while Dr. Whitby and Burnet understand it of those who were in the darkness of heathen ignorance. *Burnet's four Disc.* p. 68, 69. Compare *Limborch's Theol.* 3. xiii. 27, 28. Upon the whole, I think the sense given in the paraphrase is most easy; and next to that, know none more probable than that of Mr. Cradock, who explains it of *Christ's preaching*, while he was on earth, to those who were now *spirits in prison;* which might engage them to a holy caution, lest they also should trifle with the means of salvation which they enjoyed, and perish as the former did. Compare Mat. v. 25; Rev. xx. 7.

d *Carried safely through the water: δι' ὕδατος.*] Raphelius abundantly justifies this sense of the particle δια, when used with a *genitive* case. See *Annot. ex. Xenoph. in loc.*

e *The antitype to which.*] That is, the thing which corresponds, not with the *water*, but with the *ark*.

f *Baptism, not the putting away the pollution of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.*] It is well known the Jews laid a great stress upon their lustrations. The apostle therefore very properly cautions them against such foolish *dependencies*. A courageous readiness in the performance of their whole duty, and even in suffering *persecution* for the sake of truth, was absolutely necessary, in order to maintain that good conscience, to which in their baptism they professed such a regard, and to the exercise of which they so solemnly engaged themselves.—Archbishop Leighton has observed in this place, that the word επερωτημα, here used, is a *judicial* word, and signifies *interrogations* used in the law for a trial, or executing a process, which is much preferable to the translation Dr. Barrow gives us, namely, the free and sincere *stipulation*. *Barrow's Works*, Vol. I. p. 355. It is a *credible* fact, supported by Cyprian, and other ancient writers, that the *catechumen* had certain interrogations put to him at baptism, concerning his faith in Christ, and his renunciation of Satan, and all the works of *darkness*, and the vanity of the world; and it is very probable the apostle may refer to that *custom*.

g *Being*

SECT. VII.

and spoken in such a language as he only is capable of hearing and understanding; and when this likewise is found, then we attain salvation, *by* that great event in which at baptism we declare ourselves believers; I mean *the resurrection of* our Lord *Jesus Christ* from the dead;

1 Peter III. 21.

22 *Who is* now set down *at the right-hand of God, being gone into heaven*[g], there to take possession of the glory prepared for him, where he reigns supreme over all worlds; all the *angels, and authorities and powers*, which are there enthroned, *being made subject to him*, and humbly bowing before his superior dignity and authority.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right-hand of God; angels, and authorities and powers, being made subject unto him.

IV 1. *As Christ therefore has suffered for us in the flesh* such extreme and amazing sufferings as are not to be described, and even when their weight lay heaviest upon him, even in the agony of death, persisted in his generous design to accomplish all that was needful for our redemption and salvation; I beseech you, *arm yourselves likewise with the same* fortitude and resolution of *mind* in his cause, whatever extremities you may be called out to endure. And let this engage you, on the like principles to mortify all your irregular desires, and to die to sin; *for he who hath*, in conformity to our Lord Jesus Christ, *suffered* this crucifixion *in the flesh* of which I now speak, he *has ceased from* the habitual practice of all *sin* whatsoever[h], and considers himself as absolutely and finally dead to it,

IV. 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin;

2 *so as* never to return to it any more: And *no longer to live* [*his*] *remaining time in the flesh*, whether it be shorter or longer, *according to the lusts of men*, those lusts by which they are too frequently and generally governed; *but according to the will of God* in a holy conformity and obedience to the Divine precepts, how contrary soever they are to his own carnal and sensual

2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 inclinations, or to his worldly interests. *For* surely *the time of life that is past* [*may*] appear to

3 For the time past of our life may suffice

g *Being gone into heaven, &c.*] When the apostle speaks of the resurrection and glory of Christ, he means not only to represent him as the object of our *confidence*, but to intimate, that if we *imitate* him in his courageous *fidelity*, we may hope to partake with him in his glory.

h *He who hath suffered, in the flesh hath ceased from sin, &c.*] It is plain, that *suffering in the flesh*, cannot signify *suffering death*; because the apostle in the very next verse mentions the remaining part of life as not to be spent in the lusts of the flesh. The sense, to be sure, is something *obscure*: and I have sometimes doubted whether it may not intimate, that the consciousness of having endured *suffering for Christ*, greatly confirms our motives to *obedience*.

fice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

to [*be*] *sufficient*, and more than sufficient *for us*, to have forgotten the great end for which life was given, and *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles;* following those pleasures and pursuits to which the heathens that know not God, are addicted; *when ye walked in* all the variety of *lasciviousness, inordinate desires, excess of wine, banqueting, drunkenness, and unlawful* detestable *idolatries*[i]: *In respect to which* abomi-

4 Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you:*

4 nable course of life, *they* who were once your partners in such enormities, now *think it strange*[k] *that you run not with them*, as ye once did, *into the same profusion of* the most profligate *riot*[l]: *speaking evil* [*of you,*] wretched creatures as they are,

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

5 *Who*, though forgetful of the true honour and happiness of the human nature, *shall* nevertheless *give an account* of all this disorder and abuse, *to him who is ready* in a little time *to* appear, that he may *judge the living and the dead: For* it was *to this purpose* that *the gos-*

6 For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be

6 *pel was preached also to the* dissolute Gentiles, who might truly be said to be *dead* in trespasses and sins, *that they might be judged according to men in the flesh*[m]; that they might be brought to such a state of life, as their carnal neighbours will look upon as a kind of condemnation and death;

i *Unlawful idolatries.*] Considering how very averse the Jews were, in the *apostle's* times, to *idolatry*, I cannot think in this passage he hath a respect to them, and therefore I look upon this as one argument among many, which might be urged, to prove that this epistle was written to Gentile, as well as Jewish Christians.

k *Think it strange: ξενιζονται.*] *Raphelius (Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.)* and others, have observed that the original word is very emphatical, and expresses a perfect *amazement* and *consternation* of mind. The same word is used below at the 12th verse.

l *Profusion of riot.*] This is a very literal translation of Archbishop Leighton.

m *That they might be judged,* &c.] This interpretation, which is preferred by Brennius and Dr. Whitby, appeared to me, on a full examination, most probable; though the *text* must be confessed to be extremely difficult. Some have thought the apostle refers to those who then suffered *martyrdom* for Christianity; as if he had said, "It was *gospel* indeed, *good tidings*, even to those who *died* for it; for though men condemned their bodies, yet the salvation of their souls, which is of infinitely greater importance, has been secured by it." Dr. Whitby renders the latter clause, "That they might condemn their former life, and live a better." But this does not preserve the force of κριθωσι, nor the opposition between κατ' ανθρωπους and κατα θεον. Sir N. Knatchbull supposes οι to be understood before κατα, and renders it, "That *they who are* according to men in the flesh, that is, live a sensual life, may be condemned; and they who live according to God in the spirit, (that is, *a holy life*) may live." No interpretaton seems more singular than that of Mr. *Saurin;* who seems to consider it as referring to chap. iii. 19. and understands it of the *sinners of the old world*, and founds upon this text some hopes of the *salvation* of some of them; as if the meaning were, God sent his message to them with a *kind* design, that though their bodies perished, their souls might be saved; and he fancies that for this reason the flood came gradually upon them. *Saur. Diss.* Vol. I. p. 112. If that interpretation be preferred, which refers it to those *actually dead*, it will be, (as Mr. Baxter observes,) a proof of the *existence* of spirits in a *separate* state. The chief objection against the sense I have chosen, is, that it changes the signification of the word *dead* so soon.

SECT. vii.

death; *but might live according to God in the spirit*, might be brought to a truly spiritual and Divine life: and if when men hear of the gospel, they will not receive and improve it for this important purpose, they must expect to render to God an impartial and severe account for their abuse of it, and must stand by all the terrible consequences of their folly.

1 Peter IV. 6. be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET our devoutest meditations frequently dwell on the benefits we receive by *the death of Christ*, and the wonderful manner in which they are conveyed. The important *end*, for which *he*

Chap. iii. 18. *suffered, the just for the unjust*, was *to introduce us* into the presence and favour of *God*: let us rejoice, that we are brought *nigh* to the Infinite Majesty of heaven, the indefectible source of perfection and blessedness? and always live as in a state of *nearness and intimacy* with *him*; dreading the most distant approach to that *disobedience* to the heavenly message, which even after *the*

20 *patience of God waited on them*, proved fatal to the sinful *inhabitants of the old world*. That patience indeed waits upon *us*; but as *their* time was limited, so is *ours*.—For ever blessed be the Father of mercies, that by *Christ* he hath made provision for our salvation, as he did of old for *Noah* and his family, by command-

21 ing him to prepare an *ark*. But then let us remember, *the baptism that saves*, is not *the putting away the filth of the flesh*, but

22 *the answer of a good conscience towards God*. If we have this inward witness, let the *resurrection of Christ*, and his *exaltation* to supreme glory *at the right hand of the Father*, encourage our sublimest hopes; and let us triumph in him as our all-sufficient Saviour, who, though he were once crucified, now sits on the throne of his glory, *principalities and powers being made subject to him*.

Chap. iv. 1. Let the recollection of his bitter *sufferings* excite our *zeal* and

2 *courage* in his sacred cause, and *arm us* with a conformity of sentiments and resolutions to his own; that we may *cease from sin*; that we may spend the *residue of our lives*, not in following *the lusts of the flesh*, but in fulfilling, in all respects, the *will of our God*. Let us often reflect, that, perhaps, we were *long* in-

3 sensible of his sacred authority, and in many instances were the sport of irregular *appetites* and *passions*: let the *past part of our lives suffice*, and be deemed *more than sufficient*, to be spent in this inglorious and detestable slavery. By *mortification* let us assert our *liberty*. And though others wonder at our abstinence, severity, and

and self-denial, let us not envy that *excess of riot* into which, with unbridled eagerness, they allow themselves *to run*. But seriously considering the *awful account* they must render, (though alas! so ill prepared for it,) *to the* great *Judge of quick and dead*; let us readily choose, and chearfully submit to the severest mortification which God may require of us. Let us rather embrace a life which *infidels* would esteem *death*, than expose our immortal souls to the judgment of God, to *his* condemnation, from which there lies no *appeal*, and which will consign over impenitent sinners to an *execution* infinitely dreadful, beyond their utmost fears and apprehensions. SECT. VII. 4 5 6

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle exhorts the Christian converts to watchfulness and to fidelity, that they might rightly improve their several talents, and discharge the duties of their respective stations in the church; and to courage and fortitude amidst their discouragements and persecutions; and by way of inference from the trials to which good men were exposed, he observes that a tremendous inevitable destruction will overwhelm the impenitent and unbelieving.—1 Pet. IV. 7—19.

1 PETER IV. 7.

BUT the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

1 PETER IV. 7.

SECT. VIII.

1 Peter IV. 7.

HOW strongly are vain and sinful men attached to the amusements and interests of this mortal life, and to the gratification of their lusts! *But the* important *end of all things is at hand*[a], when this earthly globe, and all things which are therein, shall be burnt up, when the eternal state of all its inhabitants shall be determined, and immutable happiness, or misery, shall be their final portion. *Be sober therefore, and watch* against all occasions of intemperance and of impurity, and endeavour *to* preserve your souls in so Divine a posture, as that you may be habitually qualified for joining in *prayer* and those other exercises of devotion, which have such

a *The end of all things*, &c.] I cannot think this signifies the *destruction of Jerusalem*; an event, in which most of those to whom the *apostle* wrote, were comparatively but little concerned. It must undoubtedly *signify* either *death*, which may be considered as the *end* of the whole world to every particular person; or the *consummation of all things*, which may be said to be *at hand*, in the sense in which *our Lord*, long after the destruction of Jerusalem, says to the *church*, "*Behold I come quickly.*" Rev. xxii. 7, 20.

SECT. viii.

such an influence on our whole conduct. *And above all things* be careful to remember the distinguishing badge of your religion, having and *maintaining fervent love towards one another;* which as it will be very comfortable and honourable to yourselves, will be very pleasing and acceptable to God; *for* on the whole, as the wise man assures us, *love will cover a multitude of sins*[b]; it will cause us to excuse them in others, and it will entitle us through Divine mercy to the expectation of forgiveness for numberless slips and failings. *Be hospitable to each other, without grudging* the expence which may attend the exercise of a virtue which in present circumstances is so important and necessary. *As every one has received the* free *gift* of God, *exercise it towards each other, as* becomes those who know they are not themselves proprietors, but merely stewards, of what they possess, and who desire to approve themselves *good stewards of the manifold grace of God,* with which they have the honour to be intrusted. *If any one speak* in public assemblies, discoursing on the great topics of the gospel, [*let him handle the subject*] with seriousness and reverence, and *as* becomes one who knows that sublime dispensation contains no discoveries of doctrine or duty, but what are indeed *the oracles of God. If any one minister* in any office of kindness to others, and particularly in the work of a deacon, [*let it be*] *according to the* utmost *ability which God supplies; that God may in all things be glorified by Jesus Christ,* who has called us to his service, and to the hope of enjoying him for ever; *to whom,* as our great Redeemer and Saviour, *be glory and dominion* ascribed *for ever and ever. Amen.*

1 Peter IV. 8.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even* so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 And now, my *beloved* brethren, let me seriously caution you, that you *be not surprised at the*

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the

b *Love will cover a multitude of sins.*] This is agreeable to the interpretation given of the parallel text, James v. *ult.* For the further illustration of it, compare Ecclus. iii. 20; Psal. xviii. 25; Prov. x. 12; Dan. iv. 27. It would be monstrous to imagine, that *acts of liberality,* to the poor can procure the *pardon* of sin, while men continue in a course of *impenitence* and unbelief; for by this the whole gospel would be subverted. But where *acts of charity* to the souls and bodies of men, spring from an inward principle of *love* to God, and faith in Christ, with that humble regard to his *atonement* and *righteousness,* which every true Christian will have, it chearfully encourages our hopes of finding many *merciful* allowances from God in our final account with him, which those who are destitute of this *Divine* principle, in which so much of the *image of God* consists, must never expect, whatever faith or sanctity they may pretend to. Compare Mat. vii. 1, 2; James ii. 13.

c *The*

the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*, for the Spirit of glory and of God; resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.

SECT. viii.

1 Peter IV. 13.

the fiery trial[c], at the dreadful series of furious and bitter persecutions *which is to try you, as if some strange* and unexampled *thing*, beyond all reasonable expectation, *had befallen you: But* rather *rejoice* in these trials, *as being* therein *partakers of the sufferings of Christ*, the memory of which should ever be dear and precious to you; *that when his* final *glory shall be revealed*[d], *ye*, in the participation of it, *may be even transported with joy* far beyond what can now be described, or conceived. In the mean time, 14 while you are in this present world, and obnoxious to persecutions and injuries, *if you are reproached for the name of Christ*, [*ye are*] *happy*, and ought to reckon yourselves so, *because the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*[e]; which will support you under it, and spread a lustre around you; and [*though*] *he*, in whose cause ye suffer so unjustly, *is blasphemed on their part, yet on yours, he is glorified:* it shews the excellence and sublime spirit of true religion, that it can support you under the opprobrious and cruel treatment which you endure, for adhering to it and defending it. *But* 15 *let not any of you*, who have the honour to bear the Christian name, by any means *suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a malefactor*, of any other kind, *or* even *as over-busy* and assuming *in the affairs of others*[f], aspiring to direct, overrule

c *The fiery trial: πυρωσις.*] This is a *metaphor*, borrowed from *chemical* operations, and very emphatically expresses the nature of those trials, in the furnace of affliction, which were intended to refine their graces, and separate all the dross and allay from the pure gold.

d *When his glory shall be revealed.*] There is no occasion with Mr. *Fleming* to interpret this of the glory of the *Shechinah*, appearing at the *millenium*, to excite the exceeding joy of the saints after the *first resurrection*. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. III. p. 868. It probably refers to the great and glorious day of Christ's second appearance, which is so often spoken of as the grand *jubilee* of Christians, though not inconsistent with *great joy* to be received by the spirit of every good man, immediately on its entrance into the *intermediate* state.

e *Spirit of glory and of God.*] The *Velesian* reading is, "*The spirit of honour, and of glory, and Divine power, even the spirit of God, rests upon you.*" But I take the meaning to be in general, you shall have the *Spirit of God* in a very *glorious* manner to *support* you in proportion to the trials you are called out to; and this will spread a *glory* around you, even though you may be treated in the most *infamous* manner, as the vilest of *malefactors*, which we know many of the primitive Christians were.

f *As over-busy in the affairs of others.*] Αλλοτριοπισκοπος, says the learned Dr. *Lardner*, cannot here signify merely *a prying into the concerns of private families*; which could not be ranked with *such* crimes as are here mentioned, nor expose a man to the *punishment* of the *civil magistrate*: but it may signify a man that affects to *inspect* or *direct* the affairs of others; perhaps that aspires to *public* authority, a temper which appeared much amongst the Jews, particularly at Alexandria, and Cesarea, and which would naturally give great offence to the Romans, and

SECT. viii.

1 Peter IV. 16.

rule and determine them in a manner not suiting your station in life; in consequence of which you may bring any degree of ill-will upon yourselves. *But if* it please Providence to appoint, *that* [*any of you*] should [*suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed*, though the punishment, like that inflicted upon his Divine Master himself, should be ever so infamous; *but* rather *let him glorify God in this respect*, despising the shame, as well as resolutely enduring

16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 the agony that may attend it; *Because the time* [*is coming*], and just at hand, *when judgment is to begin at the house of God*[g]; for he hath determined to exercise his own people with very severe trials, giving them up for a while to the malice of their enemies; that by this means their characters may be approved, and those who are hypocrites, may be separated from those who are sincere in their christian profession; *and if* [*it begin*] *first with us, what* [*shall be*] *the end of those, who are* obstinately and presumptuously *disobedient to the gospel of God*, and who not only reject it, but persecute its professors, and en-

17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 deavour to root it out of the world? *And if the righteous* himself *be saved with difficulty*[h], how miserable must *the ungodly and the sinner* be?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly

and make them very dangerous enemies. If therefore any thing of this kind might appear among Christians, it would be of particular bad consequence in those times. *Lard. Cred.* Vol. I. p. 426. I have *paraphrased* the words so as to suggest this, yet so as to take in the most that could be imagined to be intended.

g *Time is coming when judgment is to begin at the house of God.*] As if he had said, "Do not think this a matter of *unconcerning* speculation. *No*, the time foretold by Christ (John xvi 2, &c.) is coming." I doubt not there is an allusion to that passage in Ezek. ix. 6. where it is said the *slaughter* to be made was to *begin at the sanctuary*; but this cannot be interpreted as of the *Temple of Jerusalem*, because it answers to *beginning with us*, that is, Christians, immediately after. So that Grotius' criticism upon the word τελος in the latter clause of this verse, as answering to כלה, Dan. ix. 27. and to τελος in Matt. xxiv. 6. seems quite foreign to the purpose.

h *If the righteous be saved with difficulty.*] The *apostle* seems to quote Prov. xi. 31. according to the *Seventy*, which in *sense*, though not exactly in *words*, agrees with the Hebrew. He cannot intend deliverance from the *Roman invasion*, in which so very few of those Christians were concerned; nor merely deliverance from any of their *persecutors*, because he takes it for granted, that in this sense the *righteous would be saved*, though *with difficulty*; whereas multitudes fell by persecution, even of these Christians in Bithynia, as appears by Pliny's letter. It is necessary therefore to understand it more *generally*, of the *difficulty* with which good men *get to heaven*, through this dangerous and ensnaring world. Compare Acts xiv. 18; xxvii. 7, 8, 16. where μολις signifies *with difficulty*; in which *sense* it is also used by *Philo*. (See *Wolfii Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 161.)—The turn of the latter *clause* of the *verse* in the *original*, which I have endeavoured to preserve, is *very lively*; it seems as if the apostle were solicitous to lead the *sinner* to consider, where he should hide his head; since wherever he was, he would find God immediately appearing *against him* as an irresistible enemy. This he might say by way of warning to *persecutors*, and to encourage Christians to hope that God would vindicate their cause, and preserve them from turning aside to crooked paths. And this the *connection* with the following *verse* favours.

ungodly and the sinner appear?

be? *where shall he appear* in the day of Divine vengeance, when all nature shall be, as it were, armed with terror by the God of nature, for his destruction; and when all impious transgressors shall be brought forth in his awful presence, that his just, though dreadful sentence of condemnation, may be executed in its rigour? SECT. VIII.

1 Peter IV. 18.

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Therefore let them also, who now *suffer* this temporary punishment, which *according to the will of God* so permitting, their enemies have at present a power of inflicting, acknowledge the Providence of God in this mysterious event, and *commit their souls* [*to him*] *as to a faithful Creator, in well doing;* assured that while they continue to act as under a sense of his presence, and endeavour to approve themselves to him, he will regard them as his creatures, and even his children, and will render their immortal interests secure, whatever injuries of a temporal nature he may suffer them to sustain. 19

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us continually bear in mind the approaching *end of all things;* and then we shall neither omit the exercises of devotion nor grow supine and careless in the discharge of them. Then shall we be engaged through a sense of our need of the Divine *clemency* and *indulgence,* to exercise *forbearance and candour,* and maintain the most *fervent charity* to all without distinction; and we shall then be more disposed to consider ourselves as *stewards,* and as such, be concerned to behave with all good *fidelity,* both in the use and enjoyment of our *possessions,* and in the exercise of those gifts and endowments with which God hath been pleased to entrust us. To this they should especially attend, who are called to *speak in God's name;* they should consider, that his *oracles are committed to them;* and though they cannot pretend, that the instructions they deliver from thence, are revealed to and impressed upon their minds by *immediate inspiration,* yet a reflection on the general nature of the glorious gospel, and on its important and everlasting consequences, may well dispose and form them to an humble awe and reverence in their manner of handling and dispensing it; and may remind them, that on the whole, in every ministration of the word of life, in every distribution of charity, and office of kindness, the main end to be pursued is, *That God may be glorified.* Ver. 7 8 10 11

If, in the cause of *Christ,* Providence shall call us out to encounter 12

SECT. VIII.

counter the severest persecutions, and even *fiery trials*, let us not be astonished, as if some *strange* thing had happened to us; let us not be discouraged, nor think ourselves hardly dealt with in such Divine appointments; remembering that in this case we are only *partakers in the sufferings of Christ*, that we only tread in the same rough and thorny path in which he walked before us; and that in due time, if we continue faithful to him, we shall also be made *partakers of his glory*. In the mean while, the *Spirit of God and of glory will rest upon us;* only let us be jealous of his honour with a *godly jealousy*, and be greatly concerned, that our *sins* and *indiscretions* may not throw a blemish on a *profession* which derives its appellation from him. Glorious are the privileges indeed which belong to the disciples of *Christ;* but they, notwithstanding, draw very awful consequences after them. For *judgment begins at the house of God*, and even his dearest children are exercised with trials of their fidelity and patience. Let us prepare for them before they come, that when they do come we may bear them honourably, *committing the keeping of our souls to him, as to a faithful Creator, in well-doing.* But let the wicked and the *ungodly meditate terror;* for the vengence of God will find them out; *the great day of wrath will come; and who can be able to stand?* May divine grace reclaim those who are now exposed to so terrible a condemnation; lest they know by experience, what no words can describe, no thought conceive, *the end of those who obey not the gospel of God.*

Ver. 13 15 16 14 19 18 17

SECT. IX.

The Apostle concludes this epistle with particular cautions to ministers and private Christians; urging on the former humility, diligence, and watchfulness; and exhorting the latter to a stedfast and faithful discharge of their several duties, animated by this consideration, that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, and would, after they had suffered a-while, make them perfect, according to his earnest prayer for them. 1 Pet. V. 1, *to the end.*

1 PETER V. 1.

SECT. IX.

I WOULD now in the most affectionate manner address myself to those who are *the elders among you*, or any other Christian societies into whose hands this epistle may come; and *I* would *exhort* them with the greater warmth and freedom, [*as I also am*] *an elder with them, and* an eye-*witness of the sufferings of Christ, and* as I *also* hope, through Divine grace, that I shall be

1 Peter V. 1.

1 PETER V. 1.

THE elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,

Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

be *a partaker of the glory, which shall* hereafter *be revealed*, when he shall appear the second time, in circumstances so different from those in which we have seen and conversed with him on earth. By all the engagements of love and duty to him, and by all the regard you owe to your own honour and happiness in that important day, let me beseech you to *feed the flock of God that is among you*, the churches of Christ which you are called to preside over; *discharge the episcopal office* [a], with that due inspection which its very name imports; *not by constraint* [b] as if it were an ungrateful burthen, *but willingly* and chearfully; *not for* the sake of *dishonourable gain* [c] *but of a ready mind*, and because you love the flock, and really desire its edification and welfare. *Not assuming* to yourselves *dominion over those who fall to your lot* [d]; *but being* humble, and behaving towards them with such gentle tender solicitude for their souls, and such

SECT. ix.

1 Peter v. 1.

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*; not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

2

3

a *Discharge the episcopal office.*] This idea is so plainly suggested by the word επισκοπουντες, that I thought it matter of *duty*, to translate it as I have done; that *every reader* might observe, what all candid people seem to confess, that those who are stiled *bishops*, from their having the *oversight* of others, and also presbyters or elders, are spoken of as the same persons. Compare ver. 1. And I hope the time will come, when good men will join their efforts to remove that very hard imposition, by which the ministers of some churches are obliged, in order to their entering into the ministry, to declare, not only that they are *different orders*, but that *it is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy scripture*, that they are so.

b *Not by constraint.*] It is true, that in the primitive church some were almost against their will *forced* into the episcopal office by dint of importunity. And one would hope, it was not an affected modesty with which they declined the office, especially as it was then attended with no temporal emoluments, but exposed them to distinguished *labours and sufferings*. It is difficult to see how any could in the strictest sense be *constrained*; but perhaps the apostle saw some good men too *unwilling* to accept the office, when the *churches* chose them to it, and when *inspired* teachers urged it upon them. And though little *gain* could have been made of it, and the temptation to *lord it over God's heritage* was not so great, as when ecclesiastical persons were invested with civil power (in which most of the honour and influence of their ecclesiastical character, as such, has been generally *lost*,) yet foreseeing what would happen in the church, and observing perhaps some *discoveries* of such a temper beginning to prevail, the caution was exceedingly just, proper and important. Compare Luke x. 2, and the note there.

c *Dishonourable gain.*] See the note on 1 Tim. iii. 3.

d *Those who fall to your lot.*] The word *God's*, is not in the *original*. I think therefore it is with abundant reason that the learned Mr. Boyse refers this to their not domineering over the particular *congregations*, or *bishoprics*, which were by Providence committed to their care; alluding to the division of Canaan by lots; *Boyse's Serm.* Vol. II. p. 413. An interpretation much preferable to Dr. Whitby's who explains it of the *possessions of the church*. (Compare Col. i. 12, note k.) And yet after proposing this interpretation at large, he admits at the close of his note, that what is here stiled κληρος, being in the same sentence expressed by ποιμνιον, the *flock of God*, it seems to establish the common interpretation. What the learned Mr. Dodwell had offered in support of the sense Dr. Whitby mentions, is particularly considered and refuted, by *Wolfius, Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 163.

e *Mighty*

SECT. IX.

such an entire freedom from the very appearance either of avarice or ambition, that your *examples* may be rendered worthy the imitation *of the flock*, and your conduct as instructive as any of your cautions and precepts can be:

1 Peter V. 3.

4 *And* if this be indeed your character and behaviour; you will render up your account hereafter with joy; for *when* he, who does you the honour to acknowledge himself *the chief Shepherd* of the flock, *shall appear*, to take the final survey of it, and examine into the conduct of those to whom he had partly committed it, *you shall* be most magnificently and nobly rewarded, and *receive an unfading crown of glory;* a crown which shall bloom in immortal beauty and vigour, when all the transitory glories of this world are withered like a fading flower.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

5 But it is proper that I should *likewise* address some exhortations to others besides ministers; and particularly to you, *O ye younger persons;* and that I should urge you to *be in subjection to those* [*who are*] *more advanced in age*, and to pay a decent respect to their hoary hairs. *Yea let all* [*of you*] *be subject to one another*, endeavouring, by mutual condescension, to make each other as easy and happy as possible; *and* for this purpose *be clothed with* unfeigned *humility; for God opposeth himself to the proud*, and draws up all his terrors, as it were, in battle array against him; *but giveth grace* and favour *to the humble*

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 soul. *Humble yourselves therefore* with that just reverence *under the mighty hand of God* [e] (under all the dispensations of Divine Providence, even though wicked men should be made the instruments of effecting its purposes,) *that* so *he may exalt you in due time;* for in his own most proper and well-chosen season, he will certainly raise you up, though for the present you may seem to be depressed to the lowest condi-

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 tion. In the mean while, whatever uncertainties and dangers may attend you, endeavour to live as easy as possible; *casting all your anxious care* [f] and all those burthens that might otherwise

7 Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

e *Mighty hand of God.*] Perhaps by this expression, the apostle may intend to remind them, that the hand of a righteous *Providence* was concerned in those events which were owing to the wickedness of men; so far concerned, as to over-rule them, and render them instrumental and subservient to the accomplishment of his own wise designs; as is stongly intimated Isa. x. 5; Psal. xvii. 14; and in many parallel places.

f *Your anxious care.*] So I have rendered μεριμναν, because that is the proper signification of it; what does, as it were, *rend* and *tear* the mind to pieces. See *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. II. p. 629.

wise occasion it, *upon him;* leaving it to his all-wise and all gracious Providence to determine every event of your lives; *for he careth for you* in a manner the most effectual; and his tender care will accomplish infinitely more than your utmost anxiety can possibly effect. Turn your solicitude therefore into the right channel; *be sober* in the government of your appetites and passions; *be watchful*[g] against every occasion of mischief from your spiritual enemies; *for your* great and inveterate *adversary the devil is* continually *walking about*[h], *like a roaring lion*, or evening wolf, prowling round the fold, *seeking whom he may* assault with the greatest likelihood of success, and may suddenly devour and *swallow up:* *Whom* therefore, as you regard your safety and life, be careful stoutly to *resist, being stedfast in* your adherence to *the* Christian *faith*, and armed with the most heroic courage and resolution in its defence. And to this you should the rather attend, as *knowing that* the trials, with which you are exercised, are not peculiar to you; but that *the same afflictions*, which you are called out to encounter, *are accomplished in* others of *your* Christian *brethren, who are in the world;* and you may reasonably hope, the same grace which is their support, will be also yours. *But may the God* who is the great fountain *of all grace*, from whom descendeth every good and every perfect gift, and who hath displayed his goodness in innumerable important instances, even He *who has called us to* the hope and enjoyment of *his eternal glory in Christ Jesus;* may he grant you his perpetual presence and enlivening favour; and *when you have suffered for a little while;* such trials as his infinite wisdom shall see fit to appoint, may he *make you perfect*[i] in

SECT. ix.

1 Peter V. 7.

8 Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

8

9 Whom resist, stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

9

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

10

g *Be watchful.*] St. Peter might well give such a *caution* as this, having himself received such particular and express *warning* from Christ his Master, (Luke xxii. 31, &c.) and so shamefully fallen immediately after, for want of the *watchfulness* he here recommends.

h *Walking about.*] I chose to express περιπατει with this exactness, that the *force* of its signification in this *similitude* might be observed. The word καταπιν expresses more than *devouring*, even *swallowing up;* and so represents the infatiable rage of the enemy of our salvation, with great advantage.

i *Make you perfect.*] If any one please to peruse Archbishop Leighton's excellent discourse on these words, he will have a fine *specimen* of his commentary on this *epistle;* which I esteem to be among the most instructive and useful books our language affords, and cannot but consider it as a great *honour* conferred upon me by Providence, to have been an instrument of presenting it to the world in so correct a form; as well as of rescuing many other instructive

SECT. IX.

in every good disposition; in whatever improvements you are enabled to make, *may he confirm, strengthen, and establish* [*you*] upon a firm and unshaken foundation. *To him,* there-
11 fore, who of all beings is infinitely most worthy of it, [*be*] *glory and dominion* ascribed *for ever*
12 *and ever, Amen. I have written briefly unto you by* the bearer *Silvanus,* in whom I place great confidence, *as I suppose* and conclude him to be *a* sincere Christian and *faithful brother*[k]; one who hath the interest of Christ at heart, and on whose fidelity we may rely; and I send it, *exhorting and testifying* with the greater solemnity *that this is the true grace of God wherein ye have* hitherto *stood*; and urging it therefore upon you, that you steadily adhere to it in the midst of all your difficulties and persecutions.
13 *The* [*church, which is*] *here in Babylon*[l] *chosen with* [*you*] to partake of the privileges of the gospel, *saluteth you; and* [*so doth*] *Marcus,* whom I may call *my son*[m], as being my convert and behaving to me with all filial tenderness and respect. *Salute one another with a kiss of* pure
14 and unfeigned *love* in your Christian assemblies; and may grace and *peace,* and the truest happiness, ever [*be*] *with you all who are in Christ Jesus,* who is the corner-stone which God hath laid in Sion, and the great foundation of all our eternal hopes. *Amen.*

1 Peter V. 10.

11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you (as I suppose) I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with *you,* saluteth you; and *so doth* Marcus my son.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. THIS *apostolic charge* should be received with the profoundest regard and submission, by all those who profess to reverence the authority of *Christ,* who thus, by the mouth of his servants, be-

instructive pieces of that excellent and amiable author from the oblivion in which they had so long been buried.

k *Silvanus, as I suppose, a faithful brother.*] Whether this was the Silas, or Silvanus, mentioned several times in the Acts as the companion of St. Paul, and by St. Paul himself, 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1, we cannot certainly say. The phrase, *as I suppose,* does not seem to imply any doubt. Compare Rom. iii. 28; and viii. 18, in the *original.*

l *At Babylon.*] Hence Bishop Cumberland and Mr. Cradock argue, that probably St. Peter wrote from the neighbourhood of Babylon, and found many Jews remaining there ever since the Babylonish captivity, among whom he had preached the gospel with considerable success.

m *Marcus my son.*] That is, my convert, or at least my *assistant* in the ministerial work. I have observed, Vol. VIII. sect. xxviii. note b, that John Mark, who was the companion of Barnabas and Paul, was a different person from *Mark the evangelist,* who was the intimate companion of the apostle Peter. And as he was so, it is likely that the *evangelist* is the Mark of which the apostle here speaks. Under St. Peter's instructions he is said to have written his gospel, probably receiving at different times *historical facts* from him, which he records without very exact order, and which St. Luke afterwards greatly illustrated, without changing the order by adding many more *important* circumstances.

bespeaks their attention; and it should both regulate their conduct, and animate and exalt their hopes. Let us therefore attend to this venerable *elder*, *this witness of the sufferings of Christ*, who on the mount of transfiguration had been favoured with an illustrious representation of *that glory*, wherein our Lord shall be hereafter revealed, and with which he will then invest all those, who, in his cause, have approved themselves *faithful until death*. Let *ministers*, especially, ever maintain a most affectionate and respectful regard for the *flock of God*, and *take the oversight thereof* with a *ready* and generous *mind*, and *be examples to it*, in the *mild* and condescending temper of their *common* Master, as well as in all other graces and virtues. It is indeed possible, they may pursue such a conduct as this, and meet with very little esteem or recompence, yea, with injurious and unworthy treatment, from their fellow-men. But a *crown of glory*, a royal diadem, *incorruptible* and immortal, will be hereafter conferred on them by their exalted Saviour, in the day of his triumphant appearance; and this crown, in itself so illustrious, will be a mark of still *more* distinguished honour, as it will be placed on their victorious heads in a season of such solemnity, in the view of the whole assembled world, and of *the innumerable company of angels*.—But in the mean time, while we are continued in so lowly a condition in the present world, let us all cultivate *humility* of mind, being *cloathed* with that amiable virtue, which is certainly the most *graceful* ornament of our nature; an ornament of singular value in the eye of that God, whose approbation is the surest mark and criterion of excellence and honour. And that we may accordingly entertain the more humble and lowly conceptions of ourselves, and the more grand and venerable ideas of the almighty Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things, let us often and seriously reflect upon *his mighty hand*; how gloriously it hath been displayed in the infinite variety of the works of *nature*, in the continual agency and operation of *Providence*, and in the wonderful scheme of *redemption* and *salvation*; how powerful and resistless it is in the execution of all its works; and yet how graciously its awful power is tempered and moderated, and to what kind and merciful purposes it hath been already exerted, and still is, in behalf of such degenerate and unworthy creatures as ourselves. By these considerations, let us be disposed to *bow* to every Divine dispensation with all resignation and submission; fixing our dependence upon a power so wisely and graciously exerted; rejoicing that we are permitted to *cast our cares on God*, and abhorring both the ingratitude and folly of fainting and sinking under our burdens, when we are favoured with the permission of relying on him; indeed, with a paternal *command*, as well as permission; which

SECT. IX.

Ver. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECT. IX. accordingly requires our obedience in point of duty, as well as of gratitude and honour.

Ver. Our great *adversary the devil* is still continually prowling round the fold of *Christ;* and therefore it behoves us to be constantly on
8 our *guard.* And if we would escape both his wiles and his power, let us be especially careful, that neither our *security*, nor *intemperance*, give him an *advantage* over us: but, on the contrary, as it is nothing less than our utter and eternal destruction he aims at let us strenuously *resist him*, in the exercise of a *steady faith*, and
9 with a firm resolution. Let us also remember, that trials and *afflictions* have been the lot of all the people of God in all generations; and that *the God of all grace* is able, if it seem good to his infinite wisdom, to shorten and *contract* the time of our *sufferings*
10 and by means of them whilst they last, to *strengthen* and *perfect* our immortal souls. Let us, therefore, as the close of all, continue to *stand fast* in what is so authentically *testified to be the true grace of God;* and real substantial *peace will be with us*, will be our everlasting portion, in *Christ Jesus. Amen.*

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE *PETER.*

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THERE were some in the primitive church, who called in question the genuineness and authority of *this epistle*, though it expressly claims St. Peter for its author, and contains very *strong internal characters* of its authenticity. But this being no proper or convenient place to enter largely into the argument, if any are desirous to see it truly and accurately represented, as far as it depends upon the testimonies of the *Christian fathers*, they may consult the second part of Dr. Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel-History. As to the *internal evidence*, there are some general observations, which having made already in the Introduction to the epistle of James, I think it unnecessary to repeat, though they are very applicable to the present occasion. But it is fit to observe, in *particular*, that the author of this epistle hath some allusions or appeals to facts and circumstances as relative to *himself*, which evidently refer to St. Peter; and, that besides, there is a remarkable coincidence between the sentiments of *this* and of the *former* epistle; insomuch that it is extremely probable, it was the production of the *same* author, intending to confirm the doctrines he had already advanced, in opposition to the scruples of honest men, and the objections of designing ones. St. Jerom, acquainting us with the dispute which had been raised concerning the author and authority of this epistle, informs us at the same time, that it was owing to a remarkable *difference of stile*, in this and the former unquestionably genuine epistle of St. Peter. But the truth is, there is, properly speaking, no difference of stile between the *two epistles*, but only between the *former epistle*, and a *part of this*, namely, the *second chapter*; which indeed is as different from the stile of the *remainder* of this, as it is from that of the *whole* former epistle. The fact therefore seems to be, (as the learned Bishop of London, Dr. Sherlock, supposes, in his *first dissertation*

sertation, at the end of his *discourses on prophecy*, which is well worth the reader's perusal;) I say, the fact seems to be, that the apostle in the second chapter of this epistle, describing the character of such seducers and false teachers, as endangered the faith of the Christian converts, adopts the language and sentiments of some Jewish author, containing a very strong description, in the eastern manner, of the character and conduct of some false prophets of that, or earlier ages. And as St. Jude hath likewise described these false teachers as well as St. Peter, and there is a remarkable similitude in some respects, and variation in others, between the account of these two apostles, it appears extremely probable, that they both took the principle features of their descriptions from the same author. And if this be a just account, the *foundation* of all the *doubts* concerning the genuineness of this epistle, is exceeding feeble; and no other reasonable conclusion can be drawn from them, except the singular caution of the primitive Christians, what writings they honoured with the veneration due to the *oracles of God.*

This epistle was very probably written about the year 67; which was six years after the date of the former. For the *apostle* speaks of his death as very near at hand: *I think it meet*, saith he, *as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me;* (chap. i. 13, 14;) and ecclesiastical history informs us, that the *apostle* finished his race by martyrdom in the year 68, the 14th of the Emperor Nero.

The general *design* of this epistle is, To confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former; "to excite the Christian converts to adorn and stedfastly adhere to their holy religion, as a religion proceeding from God, notwithstanding the artifices of false teachers, whose character is at large described; or the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies."

The *apostle*, with this view, having first congratulated the Christian converts on the happy condition into which they were brought by the gospel, exhorts them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in the most substantial graces and virtues. (chap. i. 1—11.) And that their attention might be the more effectually engaged, he reminds them, both that he spoke to them in the near view of eternity, it being revealed to him that he should shortly put off his earthly tabernacle; and that the subjects on which he discoursed, were not cunningly devised fables, but attested by a miraculous voice from heaven, and by divinely inspired prophecies. (ver. 12, *to the end.)* And that this exhortation might not fail of producing the most kindly and genuine effects, he cautions them against the false teachers, whose character he describes; reminding them of the judgments executed on the *apostate angels*, on the *old world*, and *on Sodom;* and at the same time, of the deliverance of Noah,

Noah, and of Lot; as suggesting considerations, which on the one hand, should terrify such ungodly wretches, and on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of upright and pious Christians. (chap. ii. 1—9.) He then further describes the character of these seducers; warning all true Christians of the danger of being perverted by them, and *them* of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves. (ver. 10, *to the end.)* And that the persons to whom he was writing, might more effectually escape the artifices of those who lay in wait to deceive, they are directed to adhere steadily and closely to the sacred scriptures, and to consider the absolute certainty and awful manner of the final destruction of this world: and then the whole is concluded with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. chap. iii. *throughout.*

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

St. PETER.

SECT. I.

The Apostle Peter, after his salutation, begins his epistle with congratulating the Christians on the happy state into which they were brought by the gospel; and urges them, in order to secure the blessings connected with their profession, to endeavour to improve in its most substantial graces and virtues. 2 Pet. I. 1—11.

2 PETER I. 1.

SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 PETER I. 1.

SECT. I.

2 Peter I. 1.

SIMON Peter, who has the honour to stile himself *a servant, and* even *an apostle of Jesus Christ;* being selected by his heavenly Master to that exalted and important office, sends his most affectionate salutation, with this his epistle, *to* all *those* to whom it may come, *who have obtained like precious faith with us, in* that glorious gospel, which is a declaration of life and salvation by *the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*[a]; in which, sinful as we are, we obtain acceptance with the Father, through

a *Of our God and Saviour*, &c.] The order of the *original* words rather favours this *translation*, though I confess it is not absolutely necessary, and it may be rendered as in our version, *of God and our Saviour*. It is observable, that the order in the next *verse* is different, and determines it to the translation there used.

SECT. i.

through that atonement which our Divine Redeemer has made, and the perfect righteousness he has introduced for the justification of all his believing people.

2 Peter I. 1.

2 For this purpose, that this invaluable blessing may be ensured to you, may *grace and peace* in all your concerns, temporal and spiritual, *be multiplied unto you by the acknowledgment of* the great *God and of Jesus* Christ *our Lord;* by a faithful and courageous profession of whose name we put ourselves into the way of receiving the most important blessings. This we may cheerfully expect, *as his Divine power has given unto us all things* in such rich abundance, *which* [*relate*] both *to life and godliness*[b]; whereby the present life is rendered much more comfortable to us, and the future and eternal life of our souls is secured. And this we obtain, *by the knowledge of him who has,* by his gospel, *called us by* that *glory* with which he has now invested us, *and* that strengthening *virtue*[c], and energy of his spirit: *By means of which*[d] illustrious seal, set to the declaration of the gospel, *are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises,* relating to blessings infinitely more valuable than any present enjoyments or expectations. And the design of God, in bestowing this inestimable favour is, *that by these you may be made partakers of a Divine nature*[e]; transformed into the image of God's moral perfections; *having escaped the corruption* [*which* [*is*

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord;

3 According as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the cor-

b *Life and godliness.*] Some imagine this to be an Hebraism for a *godly life;* but the meaning is so much *enriched* by understanding it more literally, that I choose to retain our version, and to paraphrase the words according to it.

c *By glory and virtue:* δια δοξης και αρετης.] This is the proper rendering of δια with a *genitive* case, as several *critics* have rightly observed. Dr. Whitby supposes these words to be an *hendyades,* and understands them of the *glorious and powerful effusion of the Spirit.* It is remarkable that the word αρετη used so frequently in heathen writers, seldom occurs in the New Testament; and when it does, it does not always signify the *whole of a right principle,* but generally *courage.* (See *note* h below.) And therefore, as the learned *Albert* observes, *Observ. Philolog.* p. 460.) some interpreters, apprehending the word αρετη to be in no sense applicable to God, but only to men, have rendered this clause, contrary to the Greek idiom, *to glory and virtue.* But it may very properly be understood of that *strengthening energy* which God exerts on the human mind, which appeared in so extraordinary a manner in the apostolic age.

d *By means of which*] Some would render δι ων, *for the sake of which;* that is, as they understand the clause, that we might attain *to this glory and virtue,* God has made such precious promises, of the pardon of sin, the assistances of his Spirit, and at last, eternal happiness. Dr. Whitby would read it, δι ου, *by whom,* that is, by Christ; for which he hath the authority of some *manuscripts.*

e *Partakers of a Divine nature.*] I cannot think the passages, which are produced from Philo and Josephus, as parallel to this, are sufficient to justify Dr. Whitby's interpreting this phrase of *miraculous and prophetic endowments.*

f *For*

corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge:

6 And to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness:

7 And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.

is] so generally prevalent *in the world, through* the *lust* which men are ready to indulge, to the reproach and destruction of their immortal souls. *And for this purpose*[f], *applying with all* possible *diligence*, as you have believed the gospel, be careful to accompany that belief with all the lovely train of attendant graces; *associate*[g], as it were, *to your faith, virtue*[h], true fortitude and resolution of mind, which may enable you to break through that variety of dangers with which your faith may be attended; *and to* this heroic *virtue* and bravery, that *knowledge* which may direct your resolution aright; *And* 6 *to knowledge, temperance;* that if you should be in the most plentiful circumstances, they may not be a snare to you, and the bounties of Providence may not be abused to the dishonour of God, and your own detriment; *and to* this *temperance* add *patience*, as you are not apprised what afflictions may possibly succeed your prosperity, nor how severe they may be; *and to patience* add *godliness*, that devout temper of mind, which will be so powerful a support to your patience, both by the views it gives you of the wisdom and goodness of all the Divine dispensations, and by the pleasure which it will mingle with the most painful exercises and trials; *And* 7 *to godliness*, add *brotherly kindness*, that peculiar affection which you owe to your fellow-Christians, as your brethren in the Lord; *and* add *to this brotherly kindness*, universal *love* to all your fellow-creatures, extending your kind affectionate regards to those who are entirely strangers to that religion which you are so happy

SECT. i.

2 Peter I. 5.

f *For this purpose: αυτο τουτο.*] The learned Albert supposes the particle ως to be understood, and I have translated it accordingly.

g *Associate.*] The word επιχορηγησατε properly signifies to *lead up*, as in a *dance*, one of these *virtues* after another in a beautiful and majestic order. See *Goodman's Parable of the Prod.* p 296; and *Sir Norton Knatchbull in loc.*

h *Virtue.*] *Virtue* cannot here signify an universal *regularity of mind and manners*, (see Titus iii. 8,) because every particular afterwards mentioned, is *a virtue* in that sense; and the *apostle* speaks of each as additional to what went before. It must therefore here signify *courage*, as the original word αρετη often does. (Compare *note* e above.) And it is properly added to *faith*, in reference to the need *faith* has of a courageous *defence*, and of the advantage it gives us for that purpose. The *knowledge* to be added, signifies not that *general knowledge* on which *faith* and *virtue* must be founded, but an acquaintance with the importance of the several principles and duties comprehended in that *general knowledge;* and by this *courage* would properly be *directed*, which might otherwise act at random. Nor can we imagine, that *one* of these *good qualities* can entirely subsist without *another;* but every one is to make up, as it were, a part of the *chorus*, appearing together in a lovely and venerable train.

SECT. i.

py as to embrace, and even to those who most unrighteously oppose it, and injure you for your profession of it; *For if these* excellent *things* which I have now described, *exist and abound in you, they will permit* [*you*] *to be neither inactive nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;* but as they must put you upon exerting yourselves in consequence of that knowledge, they will make these your endeavours delightful and effectual for that purpose. *But he* 9 *that is deficient in these things, is blind* as to the most important objects of knowledge; at best he is very *short-sighted*, his views are limited to a narrow circle of low and mean objects, which lie immediately before him, *and* cannot take in that enlarged and noble prospect which Christianity sets before him. He shews that *he hath contracted a* sad *forgetfulness of* [*his*] baptismal engagements, and of that *purification from the sins of his former life*, which he professed to be in search of, and hoped to find by that solemn ordinance which initiated him into the Christian church.

2 Peter I. 8.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 And as it would be very fatal to fall from these bright views and expectations into a state of such aggravated condemnation, *therefore my brethren, endeavour so much the more diligently to make your calling and* your *election sure*[i] and firm; that having been called into the church of Christ, and chosen to such exalted external privileges, and such glorious hopes, you may not finally lose them; but may be assured upon the best grounds, that you are indeed effectually called by Divine grace, and chosen to the possession of life everlasting. And this important end will be secured, if you resolutely persist in your duty, according to the directions I have now

10 Wherefore the rather brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things,

i *Calling and election sure.*] Mr. Breckel, the ingenious author of the *Christian Warfare*, hath taken pains to prove that *calling* and *election* alludes to the manner in which *armies* were *raised*; first, by *calling together* all of a proper age to bear arms; and then, *chusing out* such as were reckoned most proper for that purpose. And *he supposes* that *making the calling and election*, βεβαιαν, *stedfast*, was acting in such a manner that they might not be *cashiered* and *disbanded*, as unworthy a place in the *army* into which they had been *listed*. He has indeed proved by a great number of learned quotations, that this was the case in the Grecian armies; and Rev. xvii. 14, may perhaps be a further *illustration* of it, as he well urges. But I cannot think, that by this we are to determine our notion of the *Christian calling* and *election*; and whoever should attempt to apply this idea to such *phrases* in the multitude of places, would find it utterly unsuitable. I have therefore so taken in the idea, which this *agreeable writer* suggests, as not entirely to drop others, which I think it extremely probable the *apostle* might have in his view. And it will certainly be a good sense, if we understand the exhortation, Make it an *assured thing to yourselves*, that you are *called* and *chosen of God*.

things, ye shall never fall:

now given; *for if ye do these things ye shall never fall;* God will support you with communications of grace, suitable to any extraordinary trial, to which you may be called, till the whole is brought to a happy issue and conclusion. *For so an entrance shall be* richly and *abundantly administered unto you in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;* you shall not only be secure of obtaining happiness there, but shall be received into it with circumstances of solemn pomp and distinguished honour; and those graces which adorned your profession here on earth, shall, as it were, attend you in a radiant train to those mansions of everlasting felicity and glory, which the Divine mercy shall then assign you, through Jesus Christ, to whom the praise of all is to be ascribed, and with whom you shall reign through the endless ages of eternity.

SECT. i.

2 Peter I. 10.

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

11

IMPROVEMENT.

With all humility let us adore the Divine goodness, in making us *partakers of the like precious faith* with that which he bestowed on the *primitive believers.* And let it often be considered in this comprehensive and edifying view, as terminating on the *righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ,* on that method of justification by him and his gospel which Divine grace hath found out and proposed. With thankfulness let us own the abundant provision made for us, of *all things pertaining to life and godliness;* and above all, let the *exceeding rich* and invaluable *promises,* contained in the gospel, be reviewed with sincere delight, and be esteemed as our securest and most important treasure. May they actually have all that efficacy they are suited and intended to have, to procure and secure our *escape from the pollutions which are in the world through lust,* and to advance the *Divine resemblance* in our souls. How various, and how lovely, are the graces which are here recommended, as what we are with *all diligence* to *add to our faith: courage* and *temperance, patience* and *godliness, brotherly kindness,* and universal *charity!* These are the genuine fruits of the *knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;* these, while they honour him, and adorn our profession, will be no less honourable and beneficial to ourselves. *Short-sighted* indeed we are, if we perceive not on the one hand the happy and delightful consequences which they will finally produce; and on the other, how utterly vain our *baptismal* honours

Ver. 1 3 4 5, 7 8 9

and

SECT. i.

and engagements, and all external privileges of *church-communion*, will be, if these *vitals of christianity* are wanting. In order to excite our indolent minds to pursue these Divine graces with a spirit in some measure proportionable to their excellence, let us frequently reflect on our speedy removal from this world and all its vanities; how soon we must enter upon *eternity*. O, how desirable *then* to enter on the *kingdom of Christ*, to be honoured with an *abundant entrance* into everlasting mansions, to be received as with a cordial welcome, to sail, as it were, into that blessed harbour with a full gale of consolation and joy! Be not *deceived; God is not mocked;* it is the invariable design of the gospel to produce and advance our *holiness;* it is the immutable constitution of the *kingdom of Christ*, that without it *no man shall* be permitted to *see the Lord.* (Heb. xii. 14.)

Ver. 11

SECT. II.

The Apostle, in the view of his own approaching dissolution, reminds his Christian brethren that their religion was firmly founded, as it was attested both by the miraculous voice from heaven, which declared Jesus to be the Son of God, and by the divinely inspired prophecies, which also bore testimony to him under that character. 2 Pet. I. 12, *to the end.*

2 PETER I. 12.

SECT. ii.

I HAVE been exhorting you to cultivate the several graces of Christianity, and urging this as necessary for the security of your eternal salvation; *therefore I will not neglect, always to put you in mind of these things; though* I am aware, that *you* already *know them, and are* well *established* by the instruction you have received *in the present truth*, relating to the practice of these virtues. *But I account it right* and expedient, yea, what by my office in the church of Christ I owe to you, and my other brethren, *as long as I am in this tabernacle*, and inhabit this frail mortal body, from which, God only knows how soon I may be dislodged, *to stir you up by way of remembrance*, and to endeavour to keep your hearts under as lively a sense of Divine things as I can; *Knowing that* all these opportunities of service are confined within very narrow limits; and that *I must quickly put off* this *my tabernacle* by death, *even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me* by an express prophecy,

2 Peter I. 12

13

14

2 PETER I. 12.

WHEREFORE I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting *you* in remembrance:

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

SECT. ii.

2 Peter I. 14.

phecy, and that memorable action of his, when, just after his resurrection, he commanded me to follow him in token of my readiness to die for him, by the same kind of death which he suffered. (John xxi. 18, 19, 20.)

15 Moreover, I will endeavour, that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

But I will endeavour, to the utmost of my ability, while it pleases God to continue me among you, *that you may* have these things so familiar to your minds now, that ye may also *every one of you have them in remembrance after my departure*, when I shall have made my exit from the stage of mortality.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

For we have not been pursuing after a series of *artfully devised fables, while we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;* they were not fallaciously invented, nor rashly credited by us; *but* we *were eye-witnesses of his majesty*, and of the solemn pomp and grandeur with which he appeared at his transfiguration.

17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well-pleased.

For he then *received from God the Father* illustrious *honour and glory;* sublime honour was done him, and a refulgent glory was shed round about him, *when such a voice was sent forth to him from the magnificent glory* of the Shechinah, which then appeared so conspicuous and glorious, and made that ever-memorable proclamation, *This is my* well-*beloved son in whom I acquiesce*, (Mat. xvii. 5,) and in whom my soul is perfectly well-pleased.

18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.

And this voice which came down from heaven, we, his three distinguished friends, James and John, as well as myself, actually *heard, when we were with him in the holy mount*, which was, for the time, consecrated by the visible appearance of the Divine glory upon it.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,

And we have a surer and firmer *prophetical word*[a], the evidence of which, on the whole, is far more extensive and important than that of any single miracle, how conspicuous soever: *to which*, therefore, *ye do* very *well to* adhere, and to *take heed* to its contents, *as to a lamp shining in a dark*, obscure,

a *Surer prophetical word.*] Some are of opinion that the *apostle* intended no *comparison* in this place, but that the *comparative* is used for the *positive;* so that it only signifies a *very sure prophetical word.* As in Heb. xiii. 23, ταχιον is used for *quickly.* Acts xxv. 10, καλλιον for *well.* Compare 1 Tim. iii. 14; 2 Tim. i. 17, 18. And μικροτερος for the *least*, Mat. xi. 11; Luke vii. 28. Others assert, that the series of prophecies, when explained in the light of the New Testament, is a much clearer proof of Christ's being the Messiah, than any *single miraculous fact*, as this was. It is also debated, whether prophecy signifies the *gift* so called among Christians, or the *written prophecies of the Old Testament.* But I think it cannot be doubted, that it refers to the latter, and is the same with what is called below, in the 20th verse, the *prophecy of scripture*, and is said to have *come in old time, by the will of God.*

b *Lamp*

SECT. ii.

obscure, and gloomy *place*[b]. Observe it therefore, and adhere to it, *till the day dawn, and*
2 Peter I. 16. *the morning star arise in your hearts*, with resplendent beams, as the sure herald of an eternal day, whose sun shall no more go down, nor its
20 moon withdraw itself: *Knowing this first*, as a matter of chief importance; *that no prophecy of scripture is of private impulse*[c], or original.
21 *For prophecy was not brought of old*, to the minds of those that uttered it, *by the will of man;* they could not work themselves up to the attainment of this extraordinary gift, nor divinely foretell what they themselves desired, and whenever they pleased; *but holy men of God*, whom he honoured with that important work, *spake* [*as they were*] *borne on by the Holy Spirit;* and they were only his organs, in declaring to the people what he was disposed to suggest to them.

dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver.
14 MAY that uncertainty, that frailty and brevity of human life, which *the ministers of Christ* are frequently inculcating upon others, be seriously considered by themselves. Let them remember, that they must *quickly put off this tabernacle*, and be dismissed
13 from their present state of service; and while they have opportunity therefore, let them *stir up the minds* of the people committed to their charge, *by way of remembrance*, and *give diligence* to make such impressions upon their hearts, that when they themselves are laid down in the silence of the grave, and sleeping among the clods of the valley, by the recollection and improvement of the lessons
15 they taught, *survivors* may be quickened in their preparation to quit

b *Lamp shining in a dark place.*] Bishop *Chandler* supposes, prophecy is so called, because it grows *gradually* brighter and brighter, as it approaches nearer and nearer to its accomplishment. Bishop *Chandler's Defence of Christianity*, p. 23.

c *No prophecy of scripture is of private impulse.*] So I render επιλυσεως; and take it to signify, that men did not *work themselves up* into such agitations, as led them to utter the predictions and oracles recorded. And this, I think, the original will very well bear, and the opposition justify. To interpret it in opposition to *the right of private judgment* in the interpretation of scripture, is quite foreign to the apostle's purpose, as well as extremely injurious to common sense. See *Flem. Christology*, Vol. I. p. 147. Dr. Clark and Mr. Baxter have understood this, as if the apostle had said, *Scripture* is not to be interpreted merely as speaking of this *particular* person of whom it literally speaks; but as having a further sense, to which the expressions of the prophets were over-ruled under the influence of the spirit, in reference to the gospel-dispensation; in respect to which they sometimes were carried further than they themselves were aware. Mr. *Jefferies*, (after Dr. Hammond,) observes, that επιλυσεως originally signifies a *sign* or *watch-word* given to the *racers* when they were to start. See *his Review of the controversy between the author of the grounds, &c. and his adversaries*, p. 149.

quit *their* dissolving *tabernacles* likewise, and to follow their pious leaders into the *joy of their Lord.* SECT. ii.

It must undoubtedly yield us an inconceivable satisfaction as *Christians*, that we *have not followed cunningly devised fables ;* that the persons on whose testimony we rely as an authentic evidence to the truth of our holy religion, were *eye-witnesses* of the illustrious facts on which it is founded ; and particularly, that important oracle, *the voice from heaven*, by which the true and living God declared *Jesus of Nazareth* to be his well-beloved Son, and recommended him to the *obedient regard* of all who reverence his own outhority, was, on the mount of transfiguration, distinctly heard by *Peter*, *James*, *and John ;* who at the same time were *eye-witnesses of his glory.* Yet are we bound to acknowledge the Divine oracles of the *Old Testament*, and the numerous and various *prophecies* they contain, to be to us a superior, and more sure and incontestible evidence : let us *therefore take heed to it, as a* glorious *light to our feet, and lamp to our paths.* And let what is particularly said of *the ancient prophets* recommend to our regard *the whole sacred volume ;* namely, that it was not written by *private impulse*, but by the *inspiration of the Holy Ghost.* Let us receive it with the profoundest humility, not as *the word of man*, but as it is indeed and in truth *the word of God, which is able to make us wise unto salvation :* and let us follow its sacred illumination, till at length it conduct us to *the dawning of an eternal day*, and to the rising of that bright and *morning star*, which will shine out hereafter with the full glory of *the Sun of righteousness.*

Ver. 16 17, 18 20 21

SECT. III.

The Apostle cautions Christians against false teachers ; mentioning the judgments which God executed on the fallen angels, on the old world, and on Sodom, and the deliverance of Noah and of Lot, as considerations which should, on the one hand, terrify the ungodly, and on the other, comfort and establish the hearts of good men. 2 Peter II. 1—9.

2 Peter II. 1.

BUT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in

2 Peter II. 1.

I HAVE observed to you, that it was by a Divine impulse that the prophets delivered and wrote their predictions in former times ; *but* they were not always regarded in a becoming manner ; for *there were also false prophets among the*

SECT. iii. 2 Peter II. 1.

SECT. iii.

2 Peter II. 1.

the people[a] of the Jews, *as there shall also be among you*[b], the disciples of a greater Master than Moses ; *false teachers, who will* make parties among you, and *privately introduce* pernicious and *destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought* and redeemed *them ;* as those false prophets denied the God who had redeemed Israel from its bondage and misery ; but they will at last be found in the same dreadful circumstances, *bringing upon themselves swift destruction.* 2 *And* yet *many will persist to follow their pernicious courses, by means of whom the way of truth*, the cause of genuine and uncorrupted Christianity, *will* by many others *be blasphemed;* as if the errors and madness of those members who are corrupted, were to be charged on those who are not infected with their disorders, or the vices of a few, were to be imputed to all. 3 *And* as for the false teachers I mention, *they* will order both their teaching and their conduct *by* views and maxims of *covetousness*, and *with deceitful words will make merchandise of you*, trafficking as it were for your immortal souls. These are wretches, *whose judgment for a long time delays not*, but advances apace ; *and their destruction does not slumber*[c] how fondly soever they may dream of escaping it. But if they consider the numerous examples God has already given, of his righteous indignation, they must certainly take the

in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you : whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

a *There were also false prophets among the people.*] Dr. Sherlock, the late *bishop of London*,) has observed in his *first dissertation*, at the end of his *discourses on prophecy*, that there is a sensible difference, not so much between the *first and second epistles of Peter*, as between this *second chapter*, when compared with the *first* and *third*. This *chapter* abounds in pompous words and expressions. It is a description of *false teachers*, and seems to be extracted from some *Jewish writer*, who had given a description of the *false prophets*, either those of his own time, or those who had lived before him. This remark accounts for the great resemblance between *this chapter and the epistle of Jude ;* as was observed in the Introduction. He supposes it might be be transcribed, or translated by them, from some Jewish or Hebrew book that remained among them. See the epistle of Jude, note c.

b *As there shall also be among you.*] Hence Mr. Mede, I think somewhat precariously, infers a similitude between the errors propagated by the *false prophets* among the Jews, and those which were to over-run the Christian church ; and instances in image-worship, and the worship of departed saints and heroes, customary in the church of Rome. *Mede in loc.* Dr. Whitby applies all these things to the Nicolaitans, and Gnosticks, who were a branch of them.

c *Does not slumber.*] Mr. Blackwall observes, that this is a most *beautiful figure*, representing the vengeance that shall destroy such incorrigible sinners, as an *angel of judgment*, pursuing them upon the wing continually approaching nearer and nearer, and in the mean time keeping a watchful eye upon them, that he may at length discharge an unerring blow. See his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 297.

d *Did*

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

the alarm: *For if God did not spare the angels that sinned*[d] *but, having cast* [*them*] *down* from heaven, and sunk them *to* the abyss of *hell*[e] *delivered* [*them*] *to be reserved in chains of darkness*[f], *to* the *judgment* of the great and terrible day of account; we may from hence reasonably conclude, that he will find out a proper season to punish wicked men, the confederates and instruments of those rebellious spirits. SECT. iii. 2 Peter II. 4.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eight *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

And indeed the history of mankind furnishes us with many awful instances of this kind; and one, in which almost the whole human species was made the monument of Divine displeasure; for when God had been long insulted and provoked by their continued wickedness, we know that he *spared not the* inhabitants of the *old* antediluvian *world. Nevertheless*, it is worth our while at the same time to observe the favourable manner in which God interposed amidst the general ruin, for the perservation of the only good man that remained; for *he kept Noah, the eight* [*person*[g]] who was *a preacher of righteousness* 5

d *Did not spare the angels, &c.*] Some have imagined this to be an *imperfect* sentence: I think it complete in the 9th verse. But as the length of the sentence is so necessarily increased, by such a method of *paraphrasing* as I have chosen, (though brought into the narrowest limits, which were judged consistent with answering the end,) I have thought it proper here, and in many other instances, to divide what, in the original, makes one sentence, into several; else I must have left many passages of the sacred writings far more intricate than I found them.

e *Cast* [*them*] *down to hell.*] Mr. Mede would translate the words, *When God had condemned the angels that sinned to the punishment of hell, he delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved to judgment.* I cannot but think that the word ταρταρωσας is illustrated by the description given of Tartarus in *Homer (Iliad.* Θ, *Lin.* 13—25,) *as a deep gulph under the earth, where there are iron gates, and a brazen entrance.* It is derived from a word expressive of terror, and signifies the doleful *prison* in which wicked spirits are reserved, till they should be brought out to public condemnation and execution.

f *In chains of darkness.*] It has been queried, how the *confinement* of these unhappy spirits *in chains of darkness*, is consistent with their wandering up and down in the air, and upon earth. I think we are to answer, not by saying, that the darkness is moral, or that the light is *disagreeable* to them, as some have suggested, (compare *Reynold's Inquiry concerning the Angelic world, Query* xxx. p. 191;) but rather, that a general confinement may be reconcileable with some degree of liberty, yet still liable to restraint, as God shall see fit. Compare Luke viii. 31; Rev. xx. 1, 3. And this *air*, over which they seem indeed to have some power sometimes granted them, (Eph. ii. 2.) is to be sure *darkness*, when compared with the *light* in which they originally dwelt.

g *The eight* [*person*] *a preacher of righteousness.*] Bishop Pearson would render this clause, *Noah the eight preacher of righteousness*, supposing that Enos was the first, (Gen. iv. 26,) from whom Noah was the *eight*; that all the intermediate persons bore the same office, and that Christ preached by them all. 1 Pet. iii. 19. *Pears. on the Creed*, p. 113. To which Bishop Cumberland assents, supposing God had a continued succession of extraordinary persons in the *patriarchal* church. *Cumb. on Gen.* p. 49. But I think it certain, that Enos could not be the *first* preacher of righteousness: Adam was in a wonderful manner fitted to perform that office in the *first* world, as Noah was in the *second*, and

SECT. iii.

2 Peter ii. 5.

ousness, and seven others, who were with him in the ark, *when he brought the* irresistible destruction of the universal *deluge upon the* whole *world of the ungodly*, and destroyed all the impious wretches who had derided the admonitions of that faithful patriarch.

6 *And* in a succeeding age, when the inhabitants of those places were sunk into the lowest degeneracy, *he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with* the most dreadful *destruction, reducing them to ashes*, by raining down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them; *setting* [*them*] as *an example* and pattern *of* that final vengeance he will bring on *those* sinners *who should afterwards be ungodly*, that they might learn their own condemnation and misery from the memorials of the destruction of those once 7 noble, pleasant, and flourishing cities of the plain. *And* by the miraculous interposition of his Providence, he *rescued righteous Lot*, who was so long *grieved* and afflicted *by the lascivious con-* 8 *versation of these lawless men. For that righteous man, while he dwelt among them, seeing and hearing from day to day*, the instances of their profligate and abandoned wickedness, *tormented his upright soul by* [*those*] *unlawful* and scandalous *works*, whose cry came up at length to heaven, and brought down upon them this 9 flaming destruction. And thus on the whole, we discern in this memorable example, that on the one hand, *The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation* and danger, *and* on the other, *to reserve the unrighteous to the day of judgment to be punished* with a severity becoming their guilt and wickedness.

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with *their* unlawful deeds:)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is no *church* so pure, but some *false members*, and Ver. 1 even *false teachers*, may insinuate themselves into it; yet it is our duty to watch and pray, that the *churches* to which we respectively

and what excellent instructions both might give, Dr. Winder has finely represented. *Winder's History of Knowledge*, Vol. I. p. 17, &c. p. 81—92. Bishop Pearson adds, that if we are not disposed to refer ογδοον το κηρυκα, and translate it, *the eight preacher of righteousness*, it may be understood as denoting, not the order in which Noah was ranked, but merely the number of persons that were with him, *Noah with seven others*, or *Noah one of eight*; and accordingly I have determined it to this sense in the paraphrase. The Bishop hath produced several passages in the *Greek classics* in support of this sense of the word: and others may be seen in Raphelius. Compare also 1 Peter iii. 20.

spectively belong, may be guarded against their *pernicious* insinuations, and especially against the *destructive heresies* of those who *deny the Lord who bought them.* As we regard the edification of the church, and the salvation of our own precious and immortal souls, let us *guard* against whatever may justly deserve such an imputation as this. *Woe* be to those teachers who are actuated with a *covetous* spirit, who *teach things which they ought not for the sake of filthy lucre, and make merchandise of the souls of their hearers!* How *swiftly* does their *damnation* approach, though they perceive not the gradations by which it advances; and with what irresistible terror will it at length overwhelm them! SECT. iii. Ver. 3

That our hearts may be preserved under an awful impression of the *Divine judgments*, let us often meditate on those displays of them of which the *scripture* informs us. And let us, in particular, reflect on the fall of the *apostate angels*, who were for their first offence precipitated from heaven, and *reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day;* and while we contemplate this awful dispensation, let us adore that distinguishing grace and compassion which laid hold on *apostate man*, and provided an all-sufficient Saviour for him. Let us call to remembrance the dissolution of the *old world*, by a deluge of water, and the tremendous destruction of the *cities of the plain* by fire from heaven; and let us fear *that God*, who can at pleasure *break open the fountains of the great deep, and open the windows of heaven*, and emit from these his various magazines, deluges of water, or torrents of burning sulphur, to execute his vengeance. Who can flee from his pursuing hand? or who can be secure and happy but under *his* almighty *protection?* Yet awful as the terrors of his indignation are, *his eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.* What a noble support and encouragement may it therefore be to the small remnant, *who from day to day are vexing their righteous souls at the ungodly deeds of the wicked among whom they dwell*, to reflect on the deliverance of *Noah*, and of *Lot*, from that general destruction with which they were surrounded. A more perfect and *complete deliverance* will be at length accomplished for all the faithful servants of God, and there will be no possibility of doubting any more of his ability, or his willingness to rescue them from *every evil;* for he will make the day of his vengeance on his enemies, a day of complete and everlasting salvation to *his saints.* And the *Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that* important *day.* 4 5, 6 7, 8

SECT.

SECT. IV.

The Apostle describes in very emphatical terms, the infamous character of some ungodly and seducing teachers, who were crept into the Christian church; and warns the Christian converts of the danger of their being perverted by them, and them of the dreadful destruction to which they exposed themselves. 2 Pet. II. 10—22.

SECT. iv.

2 Peter II. 10.

2 PETER II. 10.

I HAVE been just mentioning the Divine vengeance which will be poured out on audacious and impenitent sinners; *but* I would *especially* be understood to intend *those who go after* strange *flesh, in the lust of uncleanness*; for they are particularly detestable in the eye of God, and the crimes they commit so much resemble that of Sodom, that it is the less to be wondered if they share in its punishment: *and* with them I also comprehend those who *despise dominion*, of which there are many among the licentious wretches before described, *daring* and *self-willed*, uncontroulable in their own ways, and ready to face and withstand any opposition in the prosecution of them; *they fear not to speak evil of*
11 those who possess the highest *dignities*; *Whereas the angels*, even those *who are greater in strength and power* than the rest of those glorious beings, *bear not a reviling testimony against them before the Lord*; but abhorring all scurrility and violence of language, they with all calmness and decency declare matters as they are, as revering the presence of God, how much soever they may abhor the characters of ungod-
12 ly men. (Jude 9.) *But these men* behave *as if they were irrational animals*[a], *made* by nature *be taken, and destroyed*, and consumed: the fiercest savage beasts, whom men for their own security and preservation, hunt down and destroy, can hardly be more violent, and outrageous than they; *blaspheming things which they do not understand*; and the consequence will be

1 PETER II. 10.

BUT chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:

11 Whereas angels which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

12 But these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall

a *Irrational animals.*] Dr. Whitby would render this, *But these are as natural brute beasts*: referring it to their *promiscuous exercise* of lust. And indeed it is evident, it must be explained as a *general* assertion, relating to some violence of temper; as no sin of the *tongue*, which is immediately afterwards spoken of, could be the resemblance of *a brute*. It may refer to their running headlong into extreme danger; which this licentious manner of *speech*, especially when attacking the characters of *governors*, might very naturally expose them to.

b *De-*

shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

be, that they *shall be utterly destroyed in their corruption*[b]; and many of them by their own intemperance, rashness, and folly, will hasten upon themselves that irretrievable ruin; *Receiving* indeed *the* just *reward of* their *unrighteousness*, and irregularities; *while they account it a pleasure to riot in the day :* they are *spots and reproaches* to the society to which they belong, *living luxuriously* in other places, *by means of* those *deceits*[c], which they conceal under the mask of Christianity, *banqueting with you* at the holy table[d]. Many of them are as lewd as they 14
are gluttonous, *having eyes full of adultery*[e], *and that cannot cease from sin*, even when the powers of animal nature are exhausted; but by their words and gestures they endeavour to fan the flame; *ensnaring unstable souls* by their artful addresses, and *having their heart* continually *exercised in avaricious schemes*; on all which accounts they are the *children of a curse*, and they shall find that in the end it will indeed fall heavy upon them.

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time. Spots *they are* and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin? beguiling unstable souls. An heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children :

For, *deserting the straight* and upright *way* 15
of truth and integrity, *they have wandered* in dangerous and destructive paths; *following in the way of* that infamous person *Balaam, the son*] *of Bosor*[f], *who* so *loved the wages of unrighteousness*, that he was willing to sacrifice every other interest to obtain them. *But he* 16
received, in a very extraordinary manner *the reproof*

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam *the son* of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness :

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity : the dumb

b *Destroyed in their corruption.*] The original phrase is εν τη φθορα αυτων καταφθαρησονται, and some would render it, *are destroyed by destruction*, that is, certainly, or utterly destroyed. Compare *Cradock's Apostolical History*, p. 117. They boasted of being beyond the power of *corruption* and *punishment*, but are lost in both together.

c *Living luxuriously*, &c.] This is so good and proper a sense, that one is not tempted to wish the establishing of the *reading* of αγαπαις for απαταις, which some have proposed, and so explain it of the riot of those pretended *love-feasts*, into which indeed it is not impossible that *luxury* might soon come, when persons of such a character were concerned in them; and probably that was the occasion of laying them aside.

d *Banqueting with you.*] It is not to be thought that *luxury* could be introduced into those *feasts*, which they celebrated with the *church*, without detecting their own characters; and therefore I think it most reasonable to consider their *luxury* as practised elsewhere; and to refer this *banqueting*, of which the *apostle* speaks, to their attending the *sacred banquet* of the *Lord's supper*, as a cover for their licentiousness.

e *Having eyes full of adultery :* οφθαλμους—μεστους μοιχαλιδος.] There is a prodigious strength in this expression; it properly signifies, their having an *adultress* continually before their eyes.

f *Balaam* [*the son*] *of Bosor.*] There is one *manuscript* which reads Beor, and this reading is confirmed by the Syriac version. Mr. *Ainsworth* and Dr. *Lightfoot* suppose, that the *apostle*, in writing Bosor for Beor, used the *Chaldee dialect*, as he writ in the neighbourhood of Babylon. See *Ainsworth* on Num. xxii. 5; and Dr. *Lightfoot's Addenda* to his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, on 1 Cor. xiv. cap. 4.

g *Swelling*

SECT. iv.

reproof of his transgression; for *the dumb beast* on which he rode, [*speaking with the voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet*, when he would have pressed on to his own destruction. *These*, notwithstanding all their boasted pretensions, *are fountains without water;* they are *clouds agitated by a whirlwind*, easily yielding to every wind of persecution or temptation, and themselves big with storms and tempests: But after all their turbulence and mischief, they will be found in the number of those *to whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever*, even the judgment of eternal darkness and despair.

dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18 They sometimes indeed affect sublime strains of language, which are often void of any real meaning, *and speaking swelling* [*words*] *of vanity*[g], *they ensnare in the lusts of the flesh*, which they practise and promote *in* all variety of *lasciviousness, those who were*, so far as we can judge by their external behaviour, *quite escaped*[h] *from them that have their conversation in error*, and they draw back into apostacy some, who appeared to have set their faces in good earnest towards the kingdom of heaven; by which means they become partakers in the guilt of that aggravated condemnation and ruin which these deluded and unhappy persons bring upon themselves. For *promising them liberty*, they are so far from performing their engagements, that *they are themselves* the despicable *slaves of corruption*, and have not power and spirit enough to extricate themselves out of that infamous bondage; *for by whomsoever any one is* defeated and *conquered, by him he is* of course *also enslaved;* and it is too evident to admit of dispute, that these wretched men are continually conquered by sin.

18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error:

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 And they ought certainly to be reckoned among the most miserable of mankind; *for if, having escaped the pollutions of the world, by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they*

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and

2 Peter II. 16.

17

18

19

20

g *Swelling words of vanity.*] It is observed, that here, and in many other places, these heretical teachers are represented as seducing their followers, not by the power of *miracles*, but by the *arts of address*.

h *Quite escaped*, &c.] The words ὀλίγως ἀποφυγοντας, which is the *received* reading, certainly signify, those who were *thoroughly* or *entirely* escaped. But the *Alexandrian reading* ὀλιγως, which some other *copies* in some degree imitate, where they do not entirely follow, leaves a strong suspicion on my mind, that the *apostle* might intend those who had *almost escaped*. I have therefore taken a medium, and retaining the usual reading in the *version*, have *paraphrased* the words in what I apprehend the most *natural* sense, with some regard to the other *copies*.

i *From*

and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

they are entangled and subdued by them again, caught as it were in their nets, and so lying at their mercy to be wounded and destroyed by them, *their last state is* certainly much *worse than the first:* SECT. iv. 2 Peter II. 20.

For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness at all, *than having known* [*it*,] and professed a desire and resolution of walking in it, *to have turned aside from the holy commandment*[1] *delivered to them;* for by this means their guilt is so much the more aggravated; their conduct is the more pernicious to others, and consequently to themselves. 21

But indeed when the matter comes thoroughly to be considered, it will appear, that under all the external appearances of reformation, there was still an evil nature and principle remaining, which at length prevailed; so that *it is happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog* [*is*] *returned to* gorge up *his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed* from the filthiness she had before contracted, having still the same unclean nature prevailing, is returned *to wallow in the mire*, and so makes herself as filthy as she had ever been before. (Compare Prov. xxvi. 11.) 22

IMPROVEMENT.

It is indeed matter of grievous *lamentation*, that such *wretches* as those who are here described, should be any-where found in the *christian church*. Let us be the less surprised, if any such *spots and blemishes* are discovered among us, *on whom the ends of the world are come;* but let the licentious character, here drawn, be *noted* with a just abhorrence, that if any such persons are found, they may with becoming indignation be *put away*. Many there are who seem to be as irrational and ravenous as *brute beasts*, and are far more *pernicious* to society than the race of savage or poisonous animals. They are indeed *children of a curse*, and they will inherit the curse, who thus contrive to make their lives *one scene* of iniquity, whose eyes, and lips, declare more wickedness in their *hearts* than they have power to execute. But it should be Ver. 13 12 14

1 *From the holy commandment.*] The learned Dr. Sherlock, the late bishop of London, interprets this of some *directions* drawn up by the *apostles*, relating to the conduct which Christians should maintain with regard to these *seducing teachers* they are here cautioned against. See his *Discourses on Prophecy*, Diss. I. p. 124. It is, however, certain, that it is capable of a larger interpretation, as many *holy commandments* remain upon record in the New Testament, which might guard them against the evils referred to in the preceding discourse.

SECT. IV.

be remembered, they are accountable to God, not only for all they *do*, but for all they *desire* and *wish* to do; and they are incessantly aggravating that terrible account. These disciples of *Balaam* will surely receive *his reward;* those *dark clouds* will quickly, if they continue thus to *obscure* with their crimes the *horizon* in which they ought to shine as *stars*, be doomed *to blackness of darkness for ever*. May persons of such a character, how specious soever the *form* which they wear, be universally detected and disgraced; may none of their *swelling words of vanity* entice and ensnare those who appear just *escaping* from the delusions of error and the fetters of vice; and may none permit themselves to be seduced by *promises of liberty*, from such mean and miserable *slaves of corruption.*

Ver. 15 16 17 18 19

Finally, let us learn, by the awful conclusion of *this chapter*, to guard against all temptations to *apostacy;* may we never, after having long *escaped the pollutions of the world*, be *entangled* again, and *overcome* by them. *Better*, far better, would it have been for us, *not to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment:* our *last end*, in this case, would *be worse than the beginning;* and those expressive *similes*, taken from such loathsome and detestable animals, would not be sufficient to paint out the degree, in which we should ourselves be loathsome and odious, in the sight of that God, *who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon evil*, (Habak. i. 13). May we therefore, with the *righteous*, *hold on our way;* and taking care to preserve the *cleanness of our hands* and hearts, may we daily *wax stronger and stronger*, (Job xvii. 9,) and shine with an increasing lustre; *for the path of the just should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* (Prov. iv. 18.)

20 21 22

SECT. V.

That they might be effectually guarded against the artifices of those who scoff at religion, or lie in wait to deceive, the apostle directs them to adhere closely and steadily to the holy scriptures; and represents to them the absolute certainty, and awful manner, of the destruction of this world; concluding with several weighty and pertinent exhortations. 2 Pet. III. *throughout.*

2 PETER III. 1.

SECT. V.

THIS second epistle[a] *I now write to you*, my dearly *beloved* brethren, with the same purpose

2 Peter iii. 1.

2 PETER III. 1.

THIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto

[a] *This second epistle.*] Archbishop *Tillotson* seems to think, this *last chapter* to be a distinct *epistle* by itself. See *his Works*, Vol. II. p. 718. Grotius imagines that

unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

pose with which I wrote the former; *in [both]* *which, I stir up your sincere* and upright *minds,* for such I hope they indeed are, *in* the *remembrance* of those glorious principles of our holy religion, which may be of the greatest importance to your spiritual improvement. For it

SECT. V.

2 Peter III. 1.

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

2 is my ardent desire, *that* in order to your advancement in true religion, *you may be mindful of the words which were spoken* long *before* our own time, *by the holy prophets* who lived in remote ages; *and* also *of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour*[b], who hath condescended by our instrumentality, to send you messages upon which your salvation evidently depends; a method which Divine wisdom and love hath pitched upon, to accomplish that important and desirable end: *Knowing this*

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

3 *first,* as what is most necessary to be remembered and considered, *that in the last days,* which are now approaching apace, *there shall come* profane *mockers*[c], *walking* in a most scandalous and licentious manner, *according to* the impulse of *their own* ungoverned *lusts* and appetites:

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

And they shall deride the hope of the faithful

4 followers of Christ, *saying,* "*Where is the* boasted *promise* and declaration *of his coming,* in which these silly deluded creatures reposed so great a confidence? *For since the fathers* of former ages *are fallen asleep*[d], *all things remain* just in the same state and situation *as [they were] from the beginning of the creation;* the

that it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and expresses the triumph of profane men, when they saw that Christ did not come to judgment, as it was expected he would then do. He infers from hence, that this *epistle* was written not by *Simon Peter the apostle,* but some other Simon. But I confess, I see no reason at all for any such conclusion; nor do I perceive *these scoffers* were then *actually come,* but only predicted.

b *The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.*] Some translate this clause, *The commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour;* and would from hence infer, that Simon, who wrote this epistle, was not an *apostle* himself; but the version I have given, is most agreeable to the order of the *original* words. The *learned author,* whom I mentioned above, (*sect.* IV. *note* g) observes, that the *apostolic constitutions* affirm, there was a *council of the apostles* called on occasion of these teachers, whom St. Peter guards against, and that all in common delivered this advice, which he has admonished the Christian converts to regard.

c *Mockers.*] Archbishop *Tillotson* explains this of the *Carpocrations,* a large sect of the Gnostics, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and the future judgment, and appeared quickly after the writing *this epistle.* See *Tillotson's Works,* Vol. II. p. 711.

d *Since the fathers are fallen asleep.*] Mr. *Grove* would render it, *for except that the fathers are fallen asleep;* that is, That the inhabitants of the world are continually changing, and new generations rising instead of the old, all other things continue as they were. See *Grove's Addit. Posthum. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 200.

e *Whereby.*]

SECT. V.

2 Peter III. 4.

the times and seasons revolve as they did before, and there is no such marvellous interposition of this Jesus, as to turn the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, to cause the stars to fall from heaven, to bring down vengeance and destruction on all his enemies, and to confer an ample reward on his servants." *But this they willingly are ignorant of*, and they continue ignorant of it through affectation, plain and obvious as it is from the word of God, that all nature is in his hand, and at his disposal, and that he can in whatsoever time and manner he pleases, change and overthrow its universal system; they know and consider not, *that by the* almighty and ever-efficacious *word of God, the heavens*, with all their host, *were* produced *of old, and the earth subsisting from the water*, with which the mass of it was at first covered; till by the Divine command, it emerged from it, and the liquid element flowed to its appointed channel; *and* God ordained that the earth should be nourished and supported *by water*, which is the life of the vegetable creation. Yet that very element from which it had its original and support, became at length, by Divine appointment, the means of its destruction; *whereby*[c], that is, in consequence of which constitution of things, under a different direction and agency of God, *the world that then was, being deluged with* an irresistible inundation of *water, perished*, and every thing upon the face of it was destroyed; none of the human race, or other terrestrial animals surviving, but those who, by God's special Providence, were preserved in the ark. It appears from hence credible in reason, as well as certain from Divine revelation, that the earth may be dissolved, and its inhabitants removed. *But* we know that God has determined to effect this great revolution, by a method far different from that of the former; for *the heavens and the earth, which now* [*exist*] *are treasured up*, as it were, *by the same word*, and guarded from all dangers of a second deluge of water, *being kept to* be dissolved by a deluge of *fire, on the day* which God has

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being over-flowed with water perished.

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved

c *Whereby.*] Very possibly δι ων refers to ουρανοι, *the heavens*, mentioned above, and may relate to the *windows of heaven* being opened, and pouring forth upon the earth a destructive deluge of water.

f *One*

reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

has appointed for the display *of* his righteousness at the universal *judgment, and* for the *destruction of ungodly men*, who alas! so generally abound, and towards whom his patience has been so long exercised. This is indeed in the course of Divine Providence long delayed; *but let not this one thing be hid from you*, my dearly *beloved, that one day* [*is*] *with the Lord as a thousand years*[f], *and a thousand years as one day*, all the divisions of our time are so absolutely disproportionable to his eternity, that the difference between one and another of them seems to be lost in his presence; and a vengeance certainly to be inflicted after a thousand years, is nearer in his estimation, than that which is to be executed to-morrow is in ours. And indeed as to the delay of this awful season, *the Lord is not slow concerning* the accomplishment of *his promise* to his people, who look for this complete deliverance, *as some* under the infirmities of their impatience, may be ready to *count* [*it*] *slowness: but* good reasons are to be assigned for it, most consistent with the perfections of the Divine nature; especially this, That he *is long-suffering towards us*, and endures in great compassion, as *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come* over *to repentance*, and thereby to salvation; to which, by the exercise of this patience, he seems tenderly and graciously to invite the worst and most unworthy of mankind. *But* at length the day of patience will have its period, and this day of retribution will come suddenly and irresistibly; yes, sirs, *the day of the Lord*[g] *will come as a thief in the night*, Mat. xxiv. 43, will break in upon men, when they least expect it, with a terrible alarm; even that day, *in which the heavens shall pass away*

SECT. V.

2 Peter III. 7.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, That one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

8

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness;) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

9

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens

10

f *One day as a thousand years.*] This was, as many have observed, a *proverbial expression* among the Jews, to signify, that no *finite* duration bears any proportion to the eternity of God. Plutarch has a passage exactly parallel to it in his *discourses on the slowness of the divine vengeance.*

g *The day of the Lord.*] It has always appeared surprising to me, that Dr. Hammond should refer this context to the coming of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Ray has most solidly confuted him at large, in his *three Discourses*, p. 244; 245, urging the opposition between the *deluge*, and the *day* here spoken of in the preceding *verses*, and that a long delay was intimated in the word *thousand years*; whereas the destruction of Jerusalem happened, at *farthest*, about twenty years after the writing of this *epistle. The day of judgment of ungodly men*, mentioned ver. 7, does also, I think, afford a sufficient *answer* to this *hypothesis*; as well as the mention of a *new heaven and earth*, as what was immediately to succeed this important scene.

h *Hastening*

SECT. V.

2 Peter III. 10.

away with a great noise, and the elements, of which this goodly frame of nature is composed, *being set on fire, shall be dissolved, and the earth and* all *its works, shall be burnt up,* so that none of the ornaments of nature, or of art, shall any longer continue; but the whole shall be one undistinguished heap of smoaking desolation. O, *therefore,* be persuaded to lay this to heart, and seriously and daily reflect with yourselves, *since all these things* which are now so ready to engross your thought and your affection, *shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in* the exercise of *holy conversation and piety.* We, Christians, I say, who have the express revelation of these things, how should we be affected with them, *looking for, and* as it were *hastening on* with our ardent wishes [h], *the coming of the day of God,* though it be attended with so much terror, though it be the day *in which the heavens being on fire,* as I said, *shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?* Yet still, through the Divine grace, it is a day that we have reason, not only to wish, *but* even to long for, as *we, according to* the the tenor of *his* unfailing *promise, look for* a glorious and transporting change, which will then commence, for *new heavens and a new earth,* new and everlasting abodes, which Divine mercy will then open to our raptured view, into which it will conduct us, and *in which righteousness,* perfect holiness and felicity, *dwelleth. Therefore,* my *beloved,* bearing these great truths in your minds, give up your whole souls to their influence, and *expecting these things,* these most awful and important scenes, *endeavour with* the utmost *diligence, that ye may be found by him,* by your great Lord, who will preside over even this dissolving word *in peace,* and may be presented *spotless and blameless* before him. *And* while this triumphant season is delayed, *account the long-suffering of our Lord* Jesus Christ to proceed, as it really does, not from the least defect of power, or forgetfulness of his promise, but from his gracious desire to promote the *salvation* of

vens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

11 *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness.

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless, we according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless;

15 And account *that* the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given

h *Hastening on, &c.*] This is the *emphasis* of the original expression, according to the version of Erasmus Schmidius, supported by several pertinent quotations from the *classics, by Raphelius,* (*Annot. ex Polyb. and ex Herod in loc.*) and by Mr. Blackwall, (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. II. p 180.

i *Our*

given unto him, hath written unto you;

of his people, and to afford to all who are willing to embrace it, an opportunity of securing this final and everlasting deliverance; *as also* *our beloved brother Paul*[i], whom I am far from honouring the less on account of his being sent to the Gentiles, *according to the wisdom given to him* by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *has written.* The passage *to* which I refer, is in a letter immediately directed to the Romans, but it may be considered as designed for *you*[k], and for the general use of all Christians: I mean that in which he expressly testifies, that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance; (Rom. ii. 4.)

SECT. V.

2 Peter III. 15.

16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

16 *As also in all* [*his*] other *epistles; speaking in* *them of such* persons as I have now described; for undoubtedly the words are peculiarly applicable to them: *In which* writings of his, and particularly in that from whence these words are taken, there *are some things hard to be understood*[l] *which the unteachable and unstable torture* and wrest, *as* they *also* do *other scriptures*, whether belonging to the Old Testament or the New,

i *Our brother Paul.*] It is very evident from hence, not only that Peter maintained a reverend regard for St. Paul, and looked upon him as a *brother*, but also, that he had seen *his epistle* before he wrote this.

k *Has written to you.*] Lord Barrington is of opinion, that this refers to *some epistle* not now extant, which St. Paul wrote to the *proselytes of the gate*; imagining the converting and edifying them to have been a mixed province, partly managed by the *apostles of the circumcision*, and partly by those of the *uncircumcision*. *Miscell Sacra. Ess.* II. p. 110. But as I think the whole foundation of this distinction *groundless*, I look upon this passage as a very instructive admonition to all Christians, to consider St. Paul, and the other *apostles*, as writing *to them* in their epistles, so far as a *similarity* of circumstances would admit. In which view it is of infinite importance that we should consider them, as written *to us*, in like manner as St. Peter tells us, even the ancient *prophets* considered the great subjects of which these epistles treat as relating to them. 1 Pet. i. i. 12.

l *Some things hard to be understood.*] Some by εν οις understand not the epistles of Paul, but the things spoken of. But as these are plainly mentioned as spoken of in the *scriptures*, this interpretation will still leave us under a necessity of vindicating the perspicuity of some part of scripture. Not to mention that there are several manuscripts of considerable authority which read εν αις: which expressly refers to St. Paul's epistles. It is remarkable, that Barclay explains this of the *ninth* chapter of the Romans, in which there are some things which seem to be contrary to *God's long-suffering to all*, and which are very liable to be perniciously *wrested*. See *Barc. Apol.* p. 155. It is by many writers justly remarked, that the difficulty is said to affect, chiefly αμαθεις and αστηριχτοι, *unteachable* and *unsteady* men, whose prejudices indispose them for admitting the truth, or whose levity prevents their due solicitude to retain it; but not persons of *humble teachable* minds, resolute in pursuing and maintaining the truth. And the *remedy* prescribed, is not *laying aside* the scriptures on account of their obscurity, as some would persuade us to do; but a concern to *grow in grace*, &c. (ver. 18.(The expression στρεβλωσιν, *wrest*, or *torture*, as on the wrack, plainly implies, that *violence* is done, by these bad men, to some passages of scripture, to make them speak an unnatural sense, which may answer their own purposes. And truly he must know little of the history of theological controversies, who hath not observed many deplorable instances of this.

SECT. V.

New, *to their own destruction :* putting such perverse interpretations upon them, with some shew or colour of reason, as no candid man would on the whole have thought of, or will admit. *You therefore,* dearly *beloved knowing* [*these things*] *before,* knowing especially, in how awful a manner the scene will close, and what dreadful vengeance will be executed on all wicked men, and especially on those that pollute the church of Christ, into which they have professed to enter ; *guard* [*yourselves*] *that ye may not, being entangled with the error of the ungodly, fall from your own stedfastness,* which by God's assistance you have hitherto retained. *But grow in grace,* more and more, advancing from one state of practical religion to another, *and* increasing daily *in the knowledge of our* Divine *Lord and* almighty and all gracious *Saviour, Jesus Christ ; to him* [*be*] *glory* throughout all the churches, and all the creation of God, *both now and for ever. Amen.*

2 Peter III. 16.

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware: lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

18 But grow in grace and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5 WHO is there, that can be so sluggish and lethargic, as not to be in some measure awakened and alarmed by the awful views here given, of the *dissolution,* as well as the *creation of the world, by the word of God !* Who must not even tremble, when he turns his eye back to the dreadful ruin brought on it by the universal *deluge ; when that element,* which had been, and is, the 6 means and instrument of *life* to the whole animal creation, at the Divine signal, became the means and instrument of *death !* Who can be unaffected, when he seriously reflects on *the heavens* 10 *passing away with a great noise ? on the elements melting with fervent heat ? on the burning up the earth, and all things therein ?* Let *scoffers who walk after their own lusts,* madly deride *the promise of his coming ;* let them deliver over their taunts and in- 3 sults to each other, through the succession of a *thousand years ;* were his coming at the distance of *ten thousand* generations, or a yet remoter distance, they who have any just impression on their 8 minds, of the *eternity of God,* or the immortality of the human soul, would discern the important day of final retribution, as immediate and present to their view. While *they scoff* and deride the tremendous reality, let us *hear* the declaration of its approach with the profoundest attention ; and let our souls enter deeply into 11 the alarming and important reflection. If indeed we *look for such great*

great things as these, *what manner of persons ought we to be in all* SECT. V.
holy conversation and godliness, that we may be *found of him in* ——
peace, without spot or blemish? And if we desire this blessedness, Ver.
(as who can fail earnestly to desire it, who hath a firm and steady 14
persuasion of its reality?) can we possibly live in tolerable *composure*, if we have little or no reason to conclude we shall obtain an interest and share in it? Let us be all concerned *that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour;* by 11
the knowledge of whom every grace will be greatly revived and strengthened. On these lively and important subjects of meditation let our thoughts frequently dwell, and let us endeavour, that the sentiments which result from them, may be wrought into our hearts, and controul our lives. And as for those *hard sayings*, 15, 16
which occur, either in *St. Peter* or *St. Paul*, or any other sacred and inspired writer, let us neither *wrest* nor torture them to our own *mischief* and destruction, nor be so curiously and sedulously diving into their meaning, as to neglect these, and the like plain and serious admonitions, this *sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby*. May all the powers of our souls be exerted in securing their deliverance from wrath to come; that so *the patience of God*, and his *long-suffering toward us*, may indeed prove *salvation*. And if that be indeed the case, the light of heaven will mightily illustrate those *mysteries* both of the Divine word and Providence, which our weak and defective organs of vision have not enabled us clearly to discern and unfold, while by the comparatively fainter, though in itself glorious, light of revelation, we are guided through this dark and gloomy valley.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE Apostle John, to whom the unanimous suffrage of the *ancients* hath ascribed *this epistle*, is the same with John the *evangelist*, who is said to have written his gospel in extreme *old age;* and, as Eusebius informs us, with a view to record some particulars concerning our blessed Lord, which had been omitted by the other evangelists, though he explicitly acknowledged the truth of their history, as far as it went, and confirmed it by his own testimony. (See *Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* lib. iii. cap. xxiv.) According to the title of this epistle in the *old Italic version*, and the account which is given us by St. Austin and others, it was written to the christian converts in Parthia, which was a part of the Upper Asia. But in the opinion of the learned Dr. Mill (see his *Prolegom.* p. 18, § 150. *Edit. Kuster,)* this notion had its sole original from a tradition, that the apostle John had preached the gospel in that country; whereas, if we may credit the report mentioned by Eusebius, it was St. Thomas who exercised his apostolical office among the Parthians. Others have conjectured, from some passages in this epistle, in which the persons, whom St. John addresses, are represented, as *having known Christ from the beginning*, (see chap. ii. 13, 14, and other places,) that he writes only to the Jewish Christians, who inhabited Judea and Galilee. But I very much question, whether these expressions will support the stress which hath been laid upon them; and accordingly, in my *paraphrase*, I have assigned them a more general interpretation.

And as we find nothing but conjecture and uncertainty concerning the *persons* to whom this epistle was addressed, so there is very little precision to be expected, in our enquiries concerning the *time* when it was written. From the *apostle's* saying, chap. ii. 18, *It is now the last time;* and chap. iv. 1, that *many false prophets are gone out into the world*, compared with Mat. xxiv. 24, where this is mentioned as a sign of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth; some have indeed inferred this epistle was written a very short time before the destruction of Jerusalem; whereas,

whereas, several others, (and in particular Dr. Mill) are of opinion its date should be assigned to the year 91, or 92.—It was probably written before the *apocalypse*, as I shall have occasion to observe hereafter, in sect. iv. *note*[b].

In the *stile* of this *apostle* there is a remarkable peculiarity; and especially in this epistle. His sentences, considered separately, are exceeding clear and intelligible; but when we search for their connection, we frequently meet with greater difficulties than we do even in the epistles of St. Paul. The principal signature and characteristic of his manner, is an artless and amiable simplicity, and a singular modesty and candour, in conjunction with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment. His conceptions are apparently delivered to us in the order in which they arose to his own mind, and are not the product of artificial reasoning, or laboured investigation.

His leading *design* is, "To demonstrate the vanity of faith separate from morality, to sooth and refine the warm and overzealous tempers of the Christians to whom he writes, into that amiable charity and love for which he himself was so eminent and illustrious, and to guard and arm them against the snares and efforts of *antichrist*, the grand *apostate* and the seducer of the Christian church; and of all who were endued with his spirit.

In pursuance of which pious and benevolent intention, he first testifies the Divine purity and holiness, and the grace and mercy which is exhibited in Jesus Christ, to all who lament and confess their sins with sincere desires of reformation and amendment; (chap. i. 1. *to the end.*) And then he urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, as arguments to that obedience, that brotherly love, and that victory over the world, which are the genuine fruits of Divine love, chap. ii. 1—17.) And that they might not be perverted from their course of fidelity and holy obedience, he forewarns them of the many *antichrists* who were springing up in the world; directing them to the best preservatives against their seducing and ensnaring doctrines. (ver. 18—28.) With the same intention of awakening a generous ambition in their breasts, to attain the Divine resemblance, he discourses of those exalted privileges, to which Christians, as the children of God, are entitled, and urges the necessity of holiness, both in heart and life, to prove that we are in that blessed number, (ver. 29—iii. 10.) In this view, namely, as the grand characteristic of the children of God, he further enforces brotherly love, (ver. 11, *to the end.*) Cautioning them more particularly against being deceived by seducing spirits, and directing them in what manner they might distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error; (chap. iv. 1—12;) Drawing to a conclusion, with declaring his general design to be the confirmation of their faith; reminding them of the ground they had to hope their prayers should be heard for themselves and others, who had not sinned unpardonably; and at the close, adding a reflection on the happy difference, which their knowing God in Jesus Christ had made between them and an ignorant and ungodly world, ver. 13, *to the end.*

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

St. JOHN.

SECT. I.

The Apostle John opens the pious and charitable design which he had in writing this epistle, and lays the foundation of what he has further to say, in bearing his testimony to the holiness of God, and to the mercy which he exhibits in Jesus Christ to all who are truly sensible of their sins, and confess them with sincere desires of reformation and amendment. 1 John I. 1, *to the end.*

1 JOHN I. 1.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and

1 JOHN I. 1.

SECT. i.

1 John I. 1.

MY Christian brethren, I am now going to address you on a very important subject; to speak of *that which was from the beginning* of the gospel-declaration, and indeed from the beginning of the world, and previous to its existence; of *that which we have heard* most credibly attested by authentic witnesses, and *that which we have* not taken merely on their credit, but have *seen with our own eyes*; we are going to treat of *that which we have attentively looked upon*[a] and viewed so near and so long, that it is

a *That which we have attentively looked upon: ο θεασαμεθα.*] Mr. *Blackwall* observes, (in his *Sacr. Class.* Vol. II. p. 152,) that it is by no means synonymous with the

SECT. i.

1 John I. 1. is impossible we should mistake in it; *and* which, in allusion to the condescension of our blessed Redeemer in submitting himself to be examined by our touch and feeling, I may venture to say, that even *our hands have handled*[b] *of the word*

2 *of* eternal *life*. And well may it be stiled the word of life; for *even* Jesus, who himself is *the* living word, and eternal *life*, *was* graciously *manifested*, in human flesh for the redemption of sinful men; *and we saw* [*it*] in its full evidence, *and we* chearfully *bear* our renewed *testimony*, *and declare unto you that eternal life*, *which* from the foundation of the world *was with the Father*, most intimately conversant with him, *and* united to him; but in due time, by assuming the human nature into an union with the Divine, *was manifested to us* with all the genuine characters of the promised Messiah.

3 And in consequence of this, *what we have seen and* intimately conversed with, and have not only heard of, but have ourselves *heard* speaking to us, *we declare unto you; that ye also may have communion with us* in that dignity and felicity to which we are, by Divine grace, exalted: *and truly* it is a glorious privilege well worthy your most ready acceptance and earnest pursuit; for *our communion is with* God *the Father*, *and with his* only-begotten *Son Jesus Christ*, as we are happy in an intimate and in-

4 separable union with each. *And these things we write to you*, that the Divine life may be so improved in your souls, and your meetness for the heavenly inheritance may be so apparent, and so advanced, *that your joy may*, as far as possible, *be fulfilled*, and no circumstance, which this mortal state will admit, may be wanting to complete it.

5 *And this is the* great *declaration which we have heard from him*, upon which our faith most cheerfully centers, *and* which we again *declare unto you, that God is* perfect *light*[c], consummate

and our hands have handled of the word of life.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him

the former clause, but hath a more emphatical signification, namely, that of *beholding attentively*, with a kind of delight and admiration.

b *Our hands have handled.*] This probably refers to Thomas's having insisted upon handling Christ's body, in proof of his *resurrection*, which being permitted, was a confirmation of this important fact to all after-ages. Dr. *Berriman* supposes these words were particularly levelled against the Menandrians, who denied the real existence of the *flesh of Christ*, and asserted that it was only a visible appearance: they were therefore called δοκηται, and φανταστας See his *Hist.* of the *Trin.* p. 77.

c *God is light.*] This expresses his most clear and perfect *knowledge*, for light discovers

him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth;

7 But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make

mate knowledge and holiness; *and in him there is no darkness at all*, not the least mixture of ignorance, or of sin. And *if we* pretend to *say, that we have communion with him, and walk in darkness*, that is, go on in the practice of sin, which is as contrary to his holy nature, as darkness is to that of light, whatever professions we may make of our acquaintance with Christianity, and of being zealous for its interest, *we lie, and do not the truth*, but act in direct opposition to it. *But if*, on the other hand, *we walk in the light* of holiness, *as he himself is* ever *in the light* of it, and surrounded with it as his brightest glory, *we have* then *communion* with him, and *with one another* in him; and though we are indeed conscious to ourselves of many past offences, for which so holy a God might for ever banish us from his presence, *and* of many remaining imperfections, which might discourage our approaches to him, we have this grand consolation, that *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanses us from all* our *sins*, be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous. And indeed it is a consolation which we absolutely need; for *if we say, that we have no sin*, it is too evident that *we* grossly *deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;* we must be destitute of every good principle, if we are utterly insensible of our own guilt and imperfection. But *if we confess our sins*[d] to God, with a becoming lowliness and contrition of spirit, *he is* not only merciful and gracious, but *faithful and just, to forgive us our sins*, in consideration of his engagements to our great Surety, and to us by him, *and* effectually *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, by his atoning blood, and the influence of that sanctifying spirit which it has purchased for us.

This is our ground of confidence, and our refuge as sinners; and let us often renew our applications to it: for as on this foundation we are indeed secure, so on the other hand, *if we* are so rash and presumptuous, to *say, that we have*

SECT. i.

1 John i. 6.

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9

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covers all things; his unspotted *holiness*, for light is incapable of any pollution; and his sovereign *goodness* and happiness, for light, joined with vital heat, inspires pleasure into universal nature. See Dr. *Bates's Works*, p. 537.

d *If we confess our sins.*] This so evidently refers to confessing our sins *to God*, and not to the *priest*, that one could hardly forbear being astonished, that it should ever have been urged in behalf of auricular confession; if it were not for the many examples we have of such shameful and preposterous reasoning in the arguments which are pleaded in favour of *popery*.

SECT. i.

1 John i. 10.

have not sinned, we not only lie ourselves, which in every instance must be displeasing to the God of truth; but *we*, in effect, *make him a liar*[e], who in the constitution of the gospel which he hath sent to all, goes on a supposition, that every soul to whom it is addressed, is under guilt and condemnation. *And* consequently, if we assert and maintain our own personal innocence, we shall shew, that *his word is not in us*, that this humbling message of his grace has never been cordially received by us, nor hath produced its genuine effects on our hearts.

make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 How seriously should we attend to the *word of life*, when addressed to us by those who were so *intimately acquainted* with it, and with him who brought it and revealed it to the world! In like manner may all concerned in dispensing it, be able to say that it is what they *have heard*, and as it were, *seen* and *handled*; yea, tasted and let in all its sweetness and energy. *Jesus Christ* is in- 2 deed that *life* which was *with the Father*, and is now *manifested unto us:* may we ever regard him as such, and have *communion* with *John*, and the other sacred writers, in their *communion with the* 3 *Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* Surely they, who by experience know the delight and benefit of that *communion*, will desire that others may be partakers of it with themselves. Their own joy, instead of being diminished, will be rather rendered more 4 *complete* and intense, by being in this manner imparted to others.

5 Nothing can be of more importance than to form right and worthy conceptions of God; and that we may do so, let us reflect on him, as the purest and even unmingled *light*, without any the least shade of *darkness;* as *truth* in perfection, without any mixture of falsehood or evil. And let us be particularly concerned, that as we desire to *have fellowship with him*, we allow not ourselves to *walk in darkness* of any kind, but *put off all its works*, that we may *put on the whole armour of light, and walk* 6, 7 *in the light, as he is of the light.* Let every action of our lives, every thought of our hearts, be brought to the *light of the gospel*, and tried and proved according to it. And as it would be very vain and criminal in us, to *deny our having any sin*, as it would be self-deceit to imagine it, and self-confusion to affirm it, let us, with

e *We make him a liar.*] This *text* plainly implies, that Christianity does in effect assert, that we are all in a *degenerate* state, and consequently is a clear proof of the *corruption* of human nature.

with humble thankfulness, apply to that *blood*, which is able to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Most freely *confessing our sins*, in all their aggravations, so far as our weak and limited thoughts can attain to the view of them, let us humbly plead his promise, and his covenant; and then *fidelity* and *justice* will join with *mercy*, to insure our deliverance from the punishment they merit: so that instead of being, as we have deserved, *companions* in condemnation and ruin, we shall *share together* in that complete freedom from all the penal consequences of sin, which will be the portion of all those who truly repent, and obey the gospel. SECT. i. Ver. 10 9

SECT. II.

Farther to promote that holiness of temper, which it is the great design of this epistle to recommend, the Apostle urges the propitiation and intercession of Christ, and the necessity of shewing our love to God, by obedience, by brotherly love, and by overcoming the immoderate love of the world. 1 John II. 1—17.

1 John II. 1.

MY little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus

1 John II. 1.

SECT. ii.

PERMIT me now to address myself to you, with all tenderness and endearment, as *my little children*, and to assure you, that *I write these things* concerning the readiness of God to forgive sin, not *to* encourage *you* to offend, but with a contrary purpose, *that you may not sin*. And I hope you will consider it as your highest interest, to guard against that greatest and most formidable of all evils. *But if any man*, through the surprise of a violent temptation, and remaining infirmity of human nature, do fall into *sin*, let him not absolutely despair, as if his case were hopeless; for we have still this great and important consolation, that if we are true believers, *we have an advocate with the Father*[a], to plead 1 John II. 1.

a *An Advocate with the Father.*] The word, *advocate*, in our language commonly signifies one who is to *plead* for a person in a *court of judicature*; but Dr. *Samuel Harris* hath taken great pains to show, that it properly signifies the same with *patron* amongst the Romans, or עזר in the Hebrew, a *great person*, who used to patronize the cause of some of inferior rank, and who was also a *sponsor* for their good behaviour. By this he imagines several *scriptures* may be illustrated, and particularly Isa. l. 7—9; Job xxix. 12; Psal. lxxii. 12; Job xxxiii. 23, *&c.* And in confirmation of this sentiment he brings some remarkable quotations from the *ancients*. *Harris's Observ.* p. 49—61. Perhaps there is nothing that illustrates the matter more, than the *residence* of some eminent persons from distant provinces, in the *courts* of great princes or states, whose business it was constantly to negociate with them the affairs of those whom they represented, to vindicate them from any unjust aspersions, and to advance their interest to the utmost of their power.

SECT. ii.

plead for our pardon and renew our peace, even *Jesus Christ, the righteous one;* that great exalted Saviour, who was himself, by way of eminence, and in such a degree, as no other person dwelling in human flesh ever was, so perfectly righteous, that his obedience absolutely answered the demands of the Divine law in all its extent and purity. *And he is the* great *propitiation for our sins,* to whom, under that character, we have fled with cheerful confidence; *and* it is a joy to us to reflect, that he is *not only* the propitiation *for ours, but also* [*for the sins*] *of the whole world*[b]: no nation under heaven is excluded from a share in the blessings he hath purchased, nor shall any person whatsoever be excluded, let his iniquities have been ever so great and aggravated, if he be disposed to make a proper application to him. *And by this* certain mark and evidence, *we know that we are acquainted with him* to the most happy and effectual purposes, even *if we* faithfully and uprightly *keep* all *his commandments.* For *he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar;* he falsely pretends to a knowledge of him, of which he is quite destitute; *and* therefore *in this respect the truth is not* [*in him.*] *But whosoever* uprightly and impartially *keepeth his word, in him certainly is the love of God perfected:* it is plain he has it truly in his heart, and does not, like those who are regardless of the Divine authority, make a vain and hypocritical pretence to it. And *by this we know, that we are* interested *in* the Son of God, and united to *him* by this influence of our faith upon our practice. *He that saith, he abideth in him,* and pretends a claim to his saving benefits, *ought himself so to walk, as he,* whom he calls his Divine Master, *walked,* when he was here on earth. He ought in every thing to trace, and endeavour to imitate his example.

1 John II. 1.

Jesus Christ, the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the* whole world.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

And

b *For the sins of the whole world.*] Mr. Reyner has urged this as a proof, that the merit of Christ's death shall extend, not only to *believers*, but to *virtuous heathens;* and I do not see that Christianity can receive any prejudice by our acknowledging, that if there are those in whom a *truly virtuous* temper prevails, they may be accepted of God, in consideration of the *atonement* which Christ hath made. But this will by no means prove the doctrine of *universal redemption*, in the sense in which some persons have stated it. But it seems to me, that the apostle is to be understood, as speaking only of all those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, over the whole world.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness,

SECT. ii.

1 John II. 7.

And this is so obvious and natural a truth, that I persuade myself, *brethren*, ye already know it; for herein *I write no new commandment to you, but the old commandment*, founded in nature, recommended by the Mosaic law, and that *which ye had* especially inculcated *from the beginning* of your acquaintance with the gospel, the great practical intent of which was, doubtless, presently made known to you by whomsoever it was preached. I may therefore well say, it is *the old commandment;* for it *is the word which you heard from the beginning* of your acquaintance with Christianity. Yet considering its peculiar obligations, and the new motives with which it is enforced upon us continually, I may say *again, a new commandment I write to you, which* expression *is true in him, and in you,* for he has laid us under new engagements to observe it, by his admirable love declared and exhibited to us; *because the darkness* of heathenism, and twilight of the Jewish state, *is* now *passed away, and the true light now shineth*, and in proportion to our knowledge, he may reasonably expect that our care to act suitably should be awakened. *He that saith, he is in the light*, that he enjoyeth, that he understands and receives the gospel, *and hateth his brother*, and does him any designed injury, *is in the darkness even till now.* And his ineffectual acquaintance with some principles of religion, which do not influence his heart to charity and beneficence, will, as to his real and final happiness, stand him in no stead. But *he that loveth his brother, abideth in the light*, he improves the advantages which he enjoys by the Christian religion, and as he answers its end, he will continually share the pleasure *and* the security, which it gives; *for there is no occasion of stumbling in him;* this will secure him from giving any just cause of offence; whereas the malevolent passions turn a thousand circumstances into temptations, which prove fatal to a man's credit and repose in this world, and his salvation in the next. *But* on the contrary, as I said before, *he who hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness; and* the consequence of that is, that as one who walketh in the night, without any light to guide him, *knows not whither he goeth;* so such an one, while he flattereth himself with hopes of salvation,

8 9 10 11

SECT. ii.

vation, on account of his knowledge and profession, is really ignorant of his own state, *because darkness hath blinded his eyes;* and so he is in the utmost danger of falling, before he is aware, into the bottomless pit, from whence there is no redemption.

1 John II. 11.

darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes,

12 These things I say unto you, and they are of universal concern; I hope therefore you will all attend to them, and improve them for your own advantage. *I write unto you, little children,* amongst the rest, to guard the least and weakest of you against sin: *because by his name,* even the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made an atonement for them, *your sins are forgiven you,* and I am very solicitous that you may make all due return for so inestimable a favour, as a pardon purchased at the expence of such sacred blood. [*I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning;* because ye have heard of his divine dignity and glory, who was in the beginning, who was with God, and himself God; that ye may behave aright towards that Divine Saviour, who submitted to such abasement for us, though originally he was so exalted and glorious. *I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one,* have bravely bid defiance to his allurements and terrors, in taking upon you, in so solemn a manner, the Christian profession; and I would by no means have you disgrace the victory you have already gained. *I write to you, little children*[c],] *because* even the youngest of *you have known* God, as *the Father* of

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

[c] *To you, little children,* &c.] There is such an apparent *tautology* in these three verses, as cannot, that I know of, be equalled in any other part of *scripture.* Some have imagined, that the signification of *little children* here, (in the *original* παιδία,) is different from that in the 12th *verse,* (where the word is τεκνια,) which *Wolfius* says is used to signify Christians in general; whereas παιδία refers either to those who were young in years, or lately converted to Christianity. (See *Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 259.) And they have supposed the meaning of the *apostle's* exhortation here is, that as one of the first persons *children* become acquainted with, is *their father,* so they should know God, and improve more and more in a practical acquaintance with him: and each of these *congratulations* contains a tacit *exhortation* to go on in that which he commends them for, or congratulates them upon. But on the whole, comparing the *beginning* of the 13th with the 14th *verse,* where the *same words* are repeated, I am ready to conjecture, that if they were written in the *original,* they were left out again, and were written more perfectly afterwards in the 14th; and consequently, that all that should be retained, is the *last clause* of it, in connection with the 12th. *Your sins are forgiven—because ye have known the Father.* Thus all *tautology* is avoided, and every sentiment and expression, in either of the verses, is preserved. I have therefore inclosed in a *parenthesis* all that part, both of the *text* and *paraphrase,* which may be left out without taking away any thing from the sense, or burdening it with an unnecessary repetition.

d In

of his people, have been taught to call upon him as your Father in heaven; and I desire you may, with all filial reverence and love, approve yourselves dutiful and grateful to him under that relation. And (as I have before said,) *I have written to you, fathers, because ye have known him who is from the beginning;* so also, *I have written to you, young men, because ye are strong,* you are in the full vigour of nature; and may God preserve your hearts in a right frame, and lengthen out your lives to do him much service in future and distant years. *And* this may the rather be expected, as *the word of God abideth in you,* as you have been instructed in the principles of Divine truth by your pious parents, and other teachers, *and* many of *you have* given noble specimens of the good effects of their instructions, in that ye have already *overcome the wicked one* in many of his attacks; for otherwise ye could not have assumed the profession of the Christian faith in these circumstances, nor have retained it for such a length of time.

SECT. ii.

1 John II. 13.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

14

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

And now whatever your age, station, and circumstances may be, suffer me to address to you one farther word of exhortation; which is this, *Love not the world, nor the things* [*which are*] in the world, in an irregular and excessive degree [d]; for *if any one love the world* with too great an attachment, and have his heart chiefly set on its interests, or its pleasures, it may justly be concluded, that *the love of the Father is not in him;* for there is a real inconsistence between the love of the world in this sense, and that of God: which will easily appear, when we consider what we may justly understand by the world: *For all that is in the world,* when it comes to make up the largest catalogue of good things, which it can promise to those who eagerly and idolatrously pursue it, [*is*] to be comprehended under these three well known particulars, *the lust of the flesh,* that is, the pleasurable indulgence of our carnal appetites; *and the lust of the eyes,* that is, the acquisition of money, which if not expended for other purposes for which it is designed, only serves us to behold and count over; *and*

15

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of

16

d In an irregular and excessive degree.] It is plainly necessary to attend to *such a limitation;* for otherwise there is a *degree of love* to worldly enjoyments which is rational, and which we must have for them, or we cannot in a proper manner attend to the duties of life.

e *The*

SECT. ii.

1 John II. 16.

and the pride of life[c], some ambitious pursuits, in consequence of which we may make a parade in the eyes of our fellow-creatures for a little while, in our way to the grave, which is to strip us of it all. Now it is evident, that [*these things*] considered as the food of luxury, avarice, and ambition, *are not of the Father, but of the world.* It plainly appears, that God, considered as the author of all good, cannot be pleased with such affections and pursuits; and it would be profane to suppose that they are produced or excited by him, or that the prevalence of them can be acknowledged by him, as consistent with his love

17 in the heart. Endeavour therefore, my brethren, to get more and more above such snares and entanglements as these; *and* so much the rather, as *the world and* all *the luxury of it*, and whatever belongs to it which can serve to the gratification of our desires, *passes away* like a glaring pageant, which only amuses the eye for a few transient moments, and then disappears. *But he that doeth the will of God* faithfully and steadily, *abideth for ever;* he hath built his happiness upon a basis which nothing can remove, and accordingly finds it secure, even when he quits this momentary world, and enters on an eternal and unalterable state.

of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 OFTEN let us be lifting up our eyes and our hearts to him who is our great *Advocate with the Father:* too frequently do the infirmities of our lives demand our application to him under that character. Let us rejoice that he is *Jesus Christ the righteous*, that he is the *Lord our righteousness.* While we joy in him as the *propi-*
2 *tiation for our sins*, let it comfort our heart to think, how wide the efficacy of his atonement extends. O, that *all the world* might be engaged to apply to him under this important consideration! O,

c *The pride of life: αλαζονεια του βιου.*] Erasmus Schmidius understands this of that vain and empty boasting of the continuance of life, and of projects to be executed in some future part of it, which St. James condemns. (James iv. 16.) *Raphelius* seems to have been at first of the same opinion; (see *Annotat. ex Xenoph. in loc.*) but afterwards from the use of the word αλαζονεια, in *Polybius*, (see *Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.*) he was disposed to understand it in general, of the *splendor and luxury*, which vain persons affect in their whole manner of living. But more strictly, the phrase, αλαζονεια του βιου, refers to that ambitious turn of mind, which prompts men to engage in all those pursuits, which will supply materials for their vanity, and enable them to make a figure in the world. See *Wolfius Curæ Philolog. in loc.*

a *Little*

O, that all those who profess so to apply to him, might remember how necessary it is, that if they would shew they *indeed know him, they should keep his commandments;* this, rather than any of those passionate transports of mind, on which some are ready to lay so great a stress, is *the perfection* of love to God. May the spirit of *Christ* impress upon us more of our *Master's image*, and teach us with greater care and exactness to order our *walk and conversation* by his example. Since we have an illustrious *light* to direct our path, let us make use of it to this purpose, lest eternal *darkness* come upon us. Let us learn the Divine lesson we are here taught, *to love our brethren*, and gradually to rise higher above that *love of the world*, that attachment to temporal and present interests, *which is inconsistent with the love of the Father!* When we are tempted too fondly to admire, or too eagerly to pursue this gaudy pageant, let us survey the *inventory* here given of its boasted *treasures.* Let us compute the most it can even pretend to confer upon us, and impartially weigh all that can gratify *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*, against those solid pleasures which arise from *the love of God*, against those infinite benefits which will finally result from it. *They who do his will abide for ever*, nor is their removal from this empty and transitory world any objection against it. Yea, rather, how would it be possible, or how desirable, they should *abide for ever*, were not a *removal* from such a mutable, such an unsatisfying, and in many respects afflicting world, to make a part of *the plan*, formed by Divine Providence and grace in their favour.

SECT. ii. Ver. 3, 5 6 9 15 16 17

SECT. III.

The Apostle discourses of the antichrists which then began to arise in the world, and directs Christians to the best preservatives against their seducing doctrines. 1 John II. 18—28.

1 JOHN II. 18.

LITTLE children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby

1 JOHN II. 18.

AND now, my beloved, dear to me as *little children* to the most affectionate parents [a], attend to my cautions against those many seducers, with which not only the world, but even the church abounds. *It is* indeed *the last time* [b], the

SECT. III. 1 John II. 18,

a *Little children.*] Mr. Cradock has observed, that *little children* are not so apt to *love the world;* but seem by reason of the weakness of their understanding, more likely to be seduced by artful and designing men: and therefore he imagines, that in this place there is a peculiar *propriety* in this appellation. See *Crad. Apost. Hist.* p. 489.

b *The last time.*] Some explain this of the *last age* of the Jewish church and commonwealth, because it was the period

SECT. iii.

1 John II. 18.

the last dispensation God will ever give to the world, is now promulgated; and it is no wonder if Satan endeavour to the utmost to adulterate a system from which his kingdom has so much to fear. *And as you have heard, that* one great seducer, from his opposition to Christ called *antichrist, is coming*, so I must assure you, that *even now there are many* aspiring and interested men, who act in such opposition to the Redeemer's cause, and the whole purpose of his appearance, that though they profess his name, they may not improperly be called *antichrists* [c], *by which* indeed *we* may *know that this is the last time;* for when we compare this event with the predictions of our Lord, it is so far from contradicting them, that indeed it is a great accomplishment and illustration of them. Once indeed they pretended to join themselves to us; but that it was only an hypocritical pretence to Christianity which they made, appears from the issue of it; *they went out from among us*, and *yet they were not* upon the whole *of us*, nor did truly belong to our number, while they seemed to adhere to us. *For if they had* ever *been* sincerely *of us*, so as to feel the inward power of our gospel on their hearts, *they would doubtless have continued with us;* upright men would never have seen any cause to leave us, and Divine grace would have preserved such from the temptations by which these artful deceivers have been ensnared. *But* [*this hath happened*] *that they might be made apparent*, and that we might also reap an advantage from the detection of their hypocrisy, *because* it would thereby appear that *all* who join with us in external forms, *are not* indeed *of us* [d]; but that even in the purest churches, there may be a mixture of tares among the wheat, which it will be prudence to remember, and to guard against. *And* as for you, I hope and trust you will not be seduced by

whereby we know that it is the last time.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One,

in which our Saviour had foretold the rise of many *false Christs*; and this observation, to be sure, is material: but the expression of *the last time*, from comparing other scriptures, seems to be more extensive.

c *Many antichrists.*] Dr. Whitby explains these antichrists of unbelieving Jews opposing Christianity. I rather understand them to be apostates, who had once professed themselves Christians, and brought in pernicious heretical notions.

d *That they might be made apparent, because all are not of us;* ὁτι οὐκ εἰσὶ πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.] Thus, I think, these words may be rendered; and the meaning is, that as there are some, who only pretend to be Christians, when they are not, and for some secular end mingle themselves with us, God has suffered these to be discovered, to awe and alarm others who may yet be concealed.

One, and ye know all things.

by them; for *ye have an* inward *anointing of the Holy One*, even the spirit of purity and joy, which Christ the Holy One of God, hath poured forth upon us; *and ye know all things* relating to Christianity, in such an experimental manner, as will effectually preserve you against those snares of this vain world, which have been ruinous to those unhappy apostates I have just mentioned. And as to what I have now said, *I have not written to you, because ye know not the truth*, nor have I entered so largely into the discussion of this matter, as would then have been necessary; *but* on the contrary, have contented myself with these short hints, *because ye know it*, and I am desirous to confirm you in it, and to awaken your zeal to join with me in testifying it to others, and opposing the many false doctrines which are taught in opposition to it; *for every lie is not of the truth*; there is an irreconcileable inconsistence between truth and falsehood, and the more you are confirmed in the one, the more faithfully will you guard against and oppose the other. And *who is a liar* and a seducer in the most dangerous sense that can be imagined, *but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ*[e]? *This* is the most pernicious of all errors, and tends most directly to overthrow all virtue and religion in the world, and utterly to subvert and destroy men's souls; and he who maintains this detestable doctrine, *is* in a sense *antichrist*, *who* in effect *denies* both *the Father and the Son*: For however some may pretend a zeal for the honour of God, while they are crying down that of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet so it is, that *every one who denieth the Son, hath not* any real regard to *the Father*, nor any interest in him: for God hath declared with an evidence which all who sincerely love and honour him will not fail to receive, that no man cometh to the Father but by Christ; that he is well-pleased in him as his beloved Son, and maintains a favourable intercourse with sinful men only by him. [*But he who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also*[f]] and taketh the most

SECT. iii.

1 John II. 20.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

21

22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

22

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.*

23

e *Denieth that Jesus is the Christ.*] Some are of opinion this was written against Cerinthus, who in his doctrine separated Jesus from Christ, maintaining them to be two *distinct* persons, and denied him to be the *Son of God*. See Dr. Berriman's *Hist. of the Trin.* p. 38. Compare Dr. Whitby's Preface to *this epistle*. Mr. Baxter also takes in the Simonians, Manandrians, and Carpocratians, with other heretics in those early ages. *Baxter's Works*, Vol. III. p. 218.

f *He who acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.*] These words, which I have included

SECT. iii. most effectual method to secure the continuance of his favour.

1 John ii. 24. *As for you therefore*, to whom I now address myself, let what I here say be improved by way of caution to yourselves; be on your guard against the numerous artifices of those who would ensnare and seduce you, and *let that* word *which you have heard from* me, at *the beginning* of the gospel, *abide in you* so steadily, that no man may ever wrest it from you. And *if* it be indeed so, and *that* word *which ye have heard from the beginning*, thus *abide in you, you also will abide in* that state of blessed union, in which you are, with *the Son and the Father*; you will dwell under their united protection, and find a source of delight springing up in your souls from communion with them, to which there is
25 nothing comparable in any of the enjoyments of the present world. *And this* will readily be acknowledged, if you only consider, with what exalted hopes you will then be supported; for this *is the promise which he hath promised to us;* (which while I mention, I cannot but exceedingly rejoice in the consideration of my own interest in it,) even the possession of that invaluable treasure, *eternal life*, in comparison of which, whether we consider its excellence, or its duration, all the glories of the world, and even the world itself, are lighter than vanity, and unworthy the reflection of a single moment.

26 *These things* therefore *I have written unto you concerning those who would deceive you* [g], and rob you of that inestimable treasure, that you may guard against them with the utmost viligance.

27 *And*, I trust, this will indeed be the case, for *as for you* in general, I esteem you sincere in the profession of your religion, and therefore may reasonably say, that *the unction* of the Holy Spirit, *which you have received from him* [h], who

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

26 These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you, and ye need not

included in *crotchets*, are generally printed in our *version* in *italic characters*; but they are to be found in so many good *manuscripts*, that I cannot but believe they made a part of the *original*, by whatever accident they were omitted in some early copy, to which, as it seems, too much regard has been paid. See *Mills* and *Wetstein in loc.*

g *Those who would deceive you.*] It is in the original, *they who do deceive you*; but it is plain, as has often been observed, from the commendations given them elsewhere, that it signifies no more than an *endeavour to seduce;* and there are many passages, both in sacred and profane authors, in which a person is said to do *a thing*, which he attempts. See *Mr. Blackwell's Sacr. Class.* Vol. p. 121.

h *The unction which you have received from him, &c.*] The *Spirit of God* is compared to an *anointing*, because of his precious and chearing gifts which rendered Christians more fit to encounter with their

not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

who hath given you the promise of eternal life, *abideth in you* perpetually and powerfully; *and* in consequence thereof *you have no* such *necessity* as others, *that any one should teach you* the first principles of true religion. *But* let it be your care uprightly and humbly to yield up your souls to the superior instructions of this Divine Sprit; and *as this* same *unction* from him *teacheth you concerning all things*[i], *and it is true, and has no* mixture of *falsehood* in it, *even as that has taught you, abide in him* to whom by that spirit ye are thus vitally united. *Yea,* let me *now* repeat it again, as a matter of the highest importance, comprehending in one word the whole of our duty and happiness; my dear Christian friends, dear to me as *little children* to their affectionate parents, *abide in him, that when he shall appear,* as he assuredly will, in all his pomp and glory, *we may have* humble *boldness, and may not be put to shame* and confusion *before him at his coming;* but may welcome him with cheerfulness, as those who have approved their fidelity to him, and expect by his grace, an abundant reward.

SECT. iii.

1 John II. 27.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

28

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us not be surprized, if there are some who revolt from *Christianity* in our days; evincing thereby the insincerity of their former professions; since even the *apostolic* age produced some instances of this kind. But notwithstanding this, *the foundation of God standeth firm, and the Lord knoweth them that are his:* (2 Tim. ii. 19.) *They* will continue united with his church in faith and love, and no temptation will be able entirely to separate them from it.

Ver. 18, 19

Vain

their spiritual enemies; as *wrestlers* were *anointed with oil* to make them fitter for their various exercises, and to prevent the advantages which might otherwise be taken against them. Whether this passage will be less capable of yielding support to the *popish* doctrine of *chrism*, or that of the Quakers, which asserts such an *inspiration* of all Christians as renders the office of a stated *ministry* unnecessary, it is hard to say. Compare *Limborch's Theol.* v. 77, 4, and *Barclay's Apology*, p. 52. With relation to the latter, it may be of some moment to observe, that the *Christian ministry* was in the highest repute in the *church*, when the *gifts* of the *Spirit* were poured down upon it in the greatest abundance.

i *Unction teacheth you all things.*] It seems manifest from hence, that every Christian is supposed to have been *anointed* by the *Holy Ghost*. But as it would be most absurd to pronounce it impossible, that a man in any degree of error should be a *true Christian*, it plainly shews, in how *restrained* a sense many *general* expressions, occurring in *scripture*, may be taken, and in that view is well worth our attentive regard.

SECT. iii. Vain are all pretences to adhere to the *Father*, if we desert the *Son*. To his gospel therefore let us stedfastly cleave, animated by the infinitely important promise of *eternal life*. Can we go Ver. 22, 23 to *another* Saviour? Can we expect from any other hand a *no-* 25 *bler*, or even an *equal* reward? May we all, who profess a relation 27 to him, receive an *anointing from above, which may teach us all those things* it is of importance for us to know, and which may 24 engage us to *abide in him* with inseparable fidelity. Yet a little while, and *he will again come*, will appear with a glory which will warrant, and will reward the firm attachment we have mani- 28 fested to his interests. May we not, at that important period, have reason to be *ashamed before him;* may he not be ashamed of us; but having *confessed him before men*, may we be *confessed by him before his Father, and his holy angels.* (Luke xii. 8.)

SECT. IV.

The Apostle discourses concerning the exalted privileges of the children of God, to which all true Christians are entitled, and urges the necessity of a holy temper, and of a holy life, in order to demonstrate that we are of that happy number. 1 John II. 29.—III. 10.

1 JOHN II. 29.

SECT. iii. I HAVE before been discoursing of the Divine holiness and purity: now the consideration of 1 John II. 29. this may enable you to judge, whether you are, or are not, in the happy number of the children of God. For *since ye know, that he is* perfectly *righteous, ye* may *know, that every one that practiseth righteousness, is born of him;* as the production of righteousness in the mind argues a Divine agency upon it, therefore he, in whom it is produced, is by regeneration, the Son of God.

1 JOHN II. 29. IF ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

III. 1 Now on this view I would intreat you attentively to dwell; as indeed no subject can be more worthy of your serious regard. *Behold*, my brethren, behold with delight and holy admiration, *what manner of love*, what immense, unutterable, inconceivable condescensions of love, *the Father* of universal nature, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *hath bestowed upon us*, sinful mortals, *that we should be* honoured with so sublime an appellation, should be *called the chil-*

III. 1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be

be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

children of God[a]; as he hath himself expressed it, I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor. vi. 18.) It is true indeed, this is a dignity which only attracts the observation of very few, and *in this respect the world knows us not*, and doth not acknowledge us for what we really are; *because it knoweth not him*, who is God's eternal and first-born Son, the Head of the family, through whom we have received the adoption. Such are the unhappy prejudices of apostate men against the Divine will, and the Divine image, that Christ himself was unknown while he dwelt in human flesh; and therefore it is no wonder that we are so, in that respect in which we resemble him. Nevertheless, my 2 *beloved*, it is a most certain, and a most joyful truth that *now we are the children of God, and* a truth which draws after it a long train of glorious consequences; for *it doth not yet* perfectly *appear what we shall be*[b]; the inheritance we expected is far beyond what we can at present conceive. *But* this *we know* in the general, *that if he*, by whom we have received the adoption, *be revealed*[c], as he will certainly at length be, *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*[d]; we shall have so clear and distinct a view and

SECT. IV.

1 John III. 1.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

2 *We should be called the children of God.*] The original word is τεκνα, not υιοι, and therefore should be rendered *children* rather than *sons*. It is worth observing upon this *text*, that when the *Danish missionaries* appointed some of their Malabarian converts to translate a *catechism*, in which it was mentioned as the privilege of Christians to become *the sons of God*, one of the *translators* was startled at so bold a saying as he thought it, and said, *It is too much; let me rather render it, They shall be permitted to kiss his feet. Let. of Dan. Miss.* No. 7, p. 56

b *It doth not yet appear*, &c.] It is observable that these are the words of John, of him who had not only so familiarly conversed with Christ on this sublime and delightful subject, but had seen his *transfiguration*, when Moses and Elias appeared in such refulgent glory. He also, as Mr. *Baxter* observes in this connection, (see his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 16,) saw a most glorious *vision* of the *New Jerusalem*. But it may be doubted whether *this epistle* were not of an earlier date than the *apocalypse*, and it seems most probable that it was, both considering the great age of the *apostle*, when banished to Patmos, and how naturally some things on which he touches in this *epistle*, especially relating to *antichrist*, might have been illustrated by what he saw there.

c *If he be revealed.*] This is one of the many places, wherein the *particle* εαν or ει, which is nearly equivalent to it, does not imply any *uncertainty of the event*, but is put for *when*.

d *We shall see him as he is.*] Archbishop *Tillotson* well observeth, and proves at large, that the *sight of God* is put to express the *knowledge* and *enjoyment* of him, because of its excellency and dignity, its largeness and comprehension, its spirituality and quickness, its evidence and certainty. (See his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 194.) Seneca has some most *sublime passages* in his 6th *epistle*, relating to that *Divine light* which good men should behold in a future state; the very thought of which, he says, will prohibit any thing sordid, base, or malevolent, from settling in the mind that entertains it.

e *Sin*

SECT. IV.

and discernment of him, as shall transform us into his image, even the image of his holiness, the brightest and most illustrious of the various glories with which he is invested.

1 John iii. 2.

3 But let not any imagine this is an expectation indiscriminately to be entertained by all who stile themselves Christians, or in any measure consistent with an unprofitable *and* wicked life. No, it is of the most generous tendency, and produces the most happy effects; for *every one who hath this hope in him* on a solid foundation, *purifieth himself* from every pollution, with a sincere desire to advance daily in every branch of moral perfection and excellence, till at length he becomes pure, *even as he is pure*, so far as the Divine holiness can be resembled by any creature in this mortal and imperfect state. On the other hand, *every one who practiseth sin, practiseth also the violation of the* Divine *law; for* this is the very nature and essence of sin, and what is common to every kind, and every act of it, that *sin is the violation of the law*[e], either natural or revealed. *And ye know, that he* who is so familiar to our thoughts, and our discourses, even our Divine Master and Saviour, *was manifested, that he might take away* the guilt and power of *our sins*, by his atonement, and by the sanctifying influences of his spirit; *and there is no* kind or degree of *sin in him*, nothing but what is of the most opposite nature. It is plain, therefore, that *every one who abideth in him, sinneth not*, cannot make a trade and practice of it; and that *every one who* thus habitually and allowedly *sinneth*[f], *hath not seen him nor known him:* his views and knowledge of him have been so superficial, as that they deserve not to be mentioned, since they have not conquered the love and prevalence of sin, and brought the man to a holy temper and life.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

My

e *Sin is the violation of the law.*] I choose *violation* as rather a more expressive word than *transgression*, and so answering more exactly to ανομια, which implies not only παρανομια, *a passing the bounds of God's law*, but an attempt, if possible, to *annihilate* and destroy it.

f *Every one who* habitually and allowedly *sinneth.*] It seems absolutely necessary to interpret the expression *thus*, not only to prevent some of the best of Christians from falling into *despair*, on account of those remainders of sinful imperfection, which their very *eminence* in religion causes them to *discern*, and to *lament*; while others, evidently their inferiors, are vain and ignorant enough to conclude themselves *perfect*, and lacking nothing; but likewise to make one scripture consistent with another, (compare James iii. 2,) and even to reconcile this assertion to other passages in the *epistle* before us. See chap. i. 8—10.

g *He*

SECT. iv.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous:

1 John III. 7.

My dear *little children, let no one deceive you* on this important matter by vain words, with whatever pomp, or solemnity, or plausibility, they may be attended. A being himself immutably holy, can never dispense with the want of holiness in his reasonable creatures. *He who practiseth righteousness is righteous*[g], *even as he himself is righteous:* it is his own image, and he must invariably love and delight in it, and must as invariably abhor sin, as utterly contrary to his nature. For indeed *he who practiseth* 8 *sin, is of the devil:* he imitates his character, and complies with his instigations; *for the devil sinneth from the beginning:* he introduced sin into the creation of God, and he continues still to promote it ever since, to the utmost of his power and influence[h]: *whereas* the appearance of *the Son of God* was to a quite different and contrary purpose; for he *was manifested* in human flesh, *that he might* dissolve and *destroy the works of the devil*[i], that he might recover mankind from the apostacy into which they were seduced by the temptations of Satan; and delivering them from the bondage of sin, might restore them to the practice of universal righteousness, and thereby to the favour and enjoyment of God. *Every one who is born of God,* 9 who is regenerated by Divine grace, and adopted into the number of his children, *doth not practise sin, because his seed abideth in him;* there

8 He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth

g *He that practiseth righteousness is righteous.*] It is very necessary to interpret the phrase *thus*, to avoid an *indulgence* as extravagant as the *severity* we have opposed above. For certainly it is not every one who performs *some one* just or righteous action, that can be denominated *righteous;* nor can any man be intitled to that character, who doth not in the main course of his life, practise *universal* righteousness.

h *Sinneth from the beginning*, &c.] Mr. *Limborch* imagines this phrase refers to *repeated* acts of sin, and a continued course of it which preceded Satan's expulsion from heaven. See *Limb. Theol. lib.* ii. *cap.* xx. *sect.* 4. But it seems, that the use of the *present tense* implies a *continuance* in a course of sin; which is indeed the case with respect to this malignant and unhappy spirit, who continues incorrigible, notwithstanding all he has already suffered, and all which he certainly knows, he has farther to endure.

i *Destroy the works of the devil:* λυσῃ.] This expressive word leads us to look on sin and misery as a *fabric*, of which the devil is the great *architect*, and which Christ is come to *overthrow* and demolish. Accordingly he has already broken, as it were, the *compages* and strength of it; and we may hope it will gradually be levelled, and its very *ruins* removed. He has certainly done what has a most powerful tendency to produce such an effect. But it seems driving matters to a very unjustifiable extremity, to argue from hence, as some have done, the utter *extirpation of all* moral and penal *evil* from the universe. And were not the *judgment* so palpably biassed by the *affections*, as we see it to be in many instances, it is not to be conceived that men of penetration should have laid any stress on so precarious an argument.

k *He*

SECT. iv.

there is an immortal principle implanted by God in the heart, which will not suffer a man, who hath received it, entirely to over-bear it; *and he cannot sin,* in such a manner, and to such a degree as others[k], *because he is* thus *born of God.*

1 John III. 9.

remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 *In this* therefore, and by this, as the grand characteristic, *are the children of God manifested* on the one hand, *and the children of the devil,* on the other. *Every one who doth not practise righteousness, is not of God; and* I may add, as a matter of great consequence, that *he who loveth not his brother,* as he cannot practise righteousness, a great part of which consists in brotherly love, is not of God; neither can he, without great presumption, pretend to claim a place amongst his children.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 How inestimable a privilege is it to be *born of God!* What infinite reason have those that possess it, to rejoice and be exceeding glad! With what astonishment should we reflect upon the Divine *condescension,* in admitting us to such an endearing relation! Let us *behold* with admiration and joy, *what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us,* that we sinful wretched mortals should be called *the sons of God!* Let us behold how high it rises, how wide it diffuses its effects! How glorious the *inheritance,* to which in consequence of this we are entitled! *The world indeed knows it not;* nor do we ourselves *completely* know it. Even *John,* the *beloved disciple,* who lay in the bosom of *our Lord,* and drank so deep out of the fountain-head of knowledge
2 and holiness, even he says, *it doth not yet appear what we shall be.* But let us, in sweet tranquility of soul, depend on our heavenly Father, that he will do whatever is becoming his perfect wisdom and goodness, in respect to the advancement and felicity
2 of *his own children.* During our state of *minority,* let us be contented to be at *his* allowance, and rejoice, that we are in the general told, that *when Christ,* the first-born of the family, shall make his second triumphant appearance, *we shall also appear with*

k *He cannot sin.*] It is certain these words must be taken in something of a *qualified* sense, or they would prove not only the *sinless perfection* of every child of God, but also the *impeccability* of every such person, or the *impossibility* of his sinning, which none have been wild and enthusiastical enough to assert. It must therefore, I think, be understood only as expressing a *strong disinclination* to sin, in the kind and degree referred to before.—And it is certain, there are many passages of *scripture,* in which the word, *cannot,* must be taken in such a latitude. Compare Luke xiii. 33; Heb. ix. 5; Neh. vi. 3; Numb. xxii. 18. And this phraseology *Raphelius* well illustrates by similar passages from the *classics.* See *Annot. ex Polyb. in loc.*

with him in glory, new dressed from the grave, to adorn his train, and transformed into his illustrious image, not only with respect to the glories of the *body*, but the brighter glories of the immortal *spirit*. With him we shall have an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom, and for ever experience the efficacy of that near and intimate *vision* of him, which we shall there enjoy, to transform us into the same likeness *from glory to glory*. O, that in the mean time, we may all feel the energy of *this blessed hope to purify our souls*, that our hearts and dispositions may correspond to our expectations! When *Christ* came in human flesh, it was with this important purpose, *that he might take away sin, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, and reduce to order and harmony that confusion and ruin, which *Satan* by his malicious insinuations had introduced into the world. *Blessed Jesus!* may this thy benevolent design be more and more effectual. May the empire of sin and corruption, which is the empire of *hell*, be entirely subdued, and thy celestial kingdom of grace and holiness advanced. And may none *deceive themselves*, nor forget, that *he alone is righteous, who practiseth righteousness*. By this let us judge of ourselves, whether we are the *children of God*, or *of the devil*. And instead of flattering ourselves that though we do *commit sin* with allowance, yet there may be some secret *seed* of God still concealed in our hearts; let us judge of our having received this *regenerating seed*, by its tendency to preserve us *from sin*, and the victories it enables us to gain over its destructive wiles and insufferable tyranny.

SECT. iv. Ver. 8, 5, 9, 10

SECT. V.

The Apostle discourses of the necessity and importance of brotherly love, as a distinguishing mark and characteristic of the children of God. 1 John III. 11, *to the end.*

1 JOHN III. 11.

1 John III. 11. FOR this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

I MENTIONED the want of brotherly love, as an argument of not belonging to God; and a little consideration may persuade you, that it is indeed so. *For this*, as you know, *is the message which you heard* of us the apostles and ministers of Christ, *from the beginning* of our appearance among you, as our Lord had frequently in person inculcated it, and almost with his dying breath, *that we should love one another;* And that we should *not* be *as Cain*, [*who*] *was* most apparently *of the wicked one, and* barbarously

SECT. v. 1 John III. 11. 12

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one,

SECT. V.

1 John III. 12.

rously *slew his* own innocent and pious *brother. And for what cause did he slay him?* truly for this, *because his own deeds were evil, and those of his brother righteous;* in consequence of which he was disapproved, and his brother approved by God; and this excited not his repentance, but his envy and hatred, which at length settled into the most rancorous malice, and produced

13 that horrible effect. And as there is a great deal of the same malignant temper remaining in the world, and there are many, in that sense, though not by natural descent, of the seed of Cain, *wonder not my brethren, if,* under this

14 influence, *the world hate you.* But *we,* on the other hand, *know that we are passed over, from* the boundaries and territories of *death, to* those of *life*[a], *because we* unfeignedly *love the brethren;* as they are the children of God as well as ourselves, and the members of one body with us. *He that loveth not* [*his*] *brother,* can have no good principle, but necessarily *abideth in* spiritual *death,* and must for ever continue in that miserable state, if the frame and temper of his mind be not entirely changed.

15 And this you may easily apprehend, if you consider, that *every one who hateth his brother, is a murderer;* and were it not for the restraint of human laws, that private malice which is harboured in his thoughts would produce, as it did in the instance of Cain, actual murder. *And ye* assuredly *know, that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him,* nor can any person of that detestable character enter into the celestial kingdom, the region of perfect love.

16 Jesus Christ, who reigns in that blessed world, has given us various and numberless proofs of an unparalleled charity; and it is *in this,* above all the other instances of it, that *we know* by experience the greatness of *his love, as he hath laid down his life for us*[b]: *and we* in imitation of

one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death,

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought

a *Passed over from death to life.*] This is said even of the best of men; which implies by a strong consequence, that they are, as it were, *born* in the land and territories of *death;* or that the *gospel* finds them in such a condition, as to be liable to condemnation and destruction, to the execution of a *capital sentence.* And it seems to me, that such *oblique* expressions speak such *truths* as these, in a manner peculiarly convincing and affecting.

b *We know his love, as he hath laid down his life for us.*] This *text,* as it stands in our *version,* has generally been mentioned as equivalent to Acts xx. 28, in which, as *he* who laid down his life for us, is God, as well as *man,* God is said to have done that which the man united to him did. But it is not to be denied, that many copies, which I here follow, read only αὐτὸν instead of Θεὸν: *hereby we perceive* HIS *love.* And there are many places, where

ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

of such an example *ought* to be ready *to lay down our lives for the brethren*[c], when the good of his church, or of any number of our fellow-Christians requires it. And if we ought to be willing to die for the good of others, how much more to relieve them in any of those necessities, which require us only to impart to them a little of our substance? *Whosoever therefore hath the good things of the* present *world, and when he seeth his brother in necessity, shutteth up his bowels from him:* so that he will not impart any thing out of his own abundance for his relief; *how dwelleth the love of God in him,* or with what face can he presume to call himself a Christian?

SECT. V.

1 John III. 17.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

My little children, let me speak freely to you on this head, and *let us not love* merely *in word, or in tongue,* nor content ourselves with any external and complimental expressions of regard: *but* let our affections prove the sincerity of our professions, and shew that we love *in deed and in truth.* 18

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

And in this we know, that we are of the truth, and that we are real Christians; *and* in the consciousness of this *shall assure our hearts before him,* when we draw nigh in the exercises of devotion. 19

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

For if our own *heart condemn us* of any evil which we secretly indulge, while we preserve our characters in the sight of men unsullied, we may well be thrown into terror and anxiety; knowing that *God is* infinitely *greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things* without exception; so as continually to view numberless follies, which we never observed, or have entirely forgotten, and numberless aggravations attending each, which it was impossible for us fully and distinctly to conceive. 20

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence towards God.

But, *beloved, if our hearts condemn us not,* but we have the testimony of our consciences before him, as to the sincerity of our repentance and faith, the integrity of our general walk and 21

where the relative evidently refers to a remote antecedent. Compare Heb. vii. 2. *note* a.

c *Lay down our lives for the brethren.*] That is, when the life and happiness of *many* are concerned, we ought to be willing to sacrifice *our own.* If one only were to be rescued on such terms, the argument would in a great measure fail, unless that one were of so *great importance* that in dying for him we died for many; and the *heathens* themselves saw the obligation to submit to death in such a case, though they were unacquainted with that noble motive to which the *apostle* here refers. Compare *Cicero de officiis, lib.* 1. *cap.* iii. p. 34.

SECT. V.

and conversation, [*then*] *have we* that *confidence* and freedom of speech *before God*, in our addresses to him, which nothing else could give us, and which it is impossible we should have, while we know that we deal deceitfully in any instance, either with him or our fellow-creatures.

1 John III. 21.

22 *And* we know, that *whatever we ask, we* shall *receive of him*, if subservient to our truest good, *because we* are conscious of a prevailing care to *keep his commandments, and* to *do the things which* we have reason to apprehend *are pleasing in his sight*; which he, as the righteous God, will be pleased with, when proceeding from a sincere principle of faith in Christ, and attended with those humble regards to him, which the imperfection of our own obedience, in its best estate, will require. *And this is his* great *command, That we should believe in the name of his* dear *Son Jesus Christ*, and endeavour to grow more in that blessed principle of faith in him; *and* that we should unfeignedly and cordially *love one another, as he hath* so strongly and affectionately *charged us* to do. *And* this is the true way to have that communion with God, to which I expressed, in the beginning of my epistle, such a desire to introduce you: for *he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he*, that is, God, *abideth in that man: and in this we* farther *know, that he abideth in us* by such an intimate union, even *from the spirit which he hath given us*, and which is the token and effect of his habitation in us; producing in our souls by his gracious operation, the image of God, and forming us to an intimacy with, and nearness to him.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. O THAT the Divine *Spirit* which God hath given *to dwell* in
11 believers, and by which he *himself* resides in them, may teach us more effectually this great lesson of *love*, which is so agreeable to the purposes for which he was conferred! Let us abhor the *temper of Cain*, as much as we abhor the actions it produced,
12 and dread the doom they incurred. As for *that hatred of the world*, which in a steady adherence to our duty may probably fall to our lot, let it by no means surprise or discourage us. It is surely enough to support our spirits under the malice and outrage of

of a wicked world, that if we are steady and consistent Christians, SECT. V.
we may know, that we are passed from death to life. O blessed
transition! O the adorable riches of Divine grace to which it is Ver.
owing! May the ardour of our *love to our brethren* render this 14
happy change more and more apparent; and may this *Christian*
benevolence be so ardent in our hearts, as to make us willing,
when certain duty requires it, *even to lay down our lives for them:* 16
having been ourselves distinguished with the like token of the
love of our Divine Master, *who spared not his own life for us;*
and O, what are even *thousands* of our lives in comparison of *his!*
And shall we then, while our brethren in the Lord are in necessity, 17
be tenacious *of our substance?* When we are surrounded with
plenty, shall we be unwilling to impart a little of our abundance
for their relief, or content ourselves with the charity of *words,* 18
which cost us nothing, while we with-hold the things *that are*
needful for them? How will such shameful, detestable *hypocrisy*
disgrace all our pretensions to the *love of God:* but let us treat all
hypocrisy either towards God or man, with detestation and abhor-
rence. *Let us love, not only in word* and in profession, *but in deed*
and in truth, and rather chuse that our actions should exceed our
engagements, than disappoint in any instance the expectations we
have raised.

Of what infinite importance is it to *have confidence towards God* 19
in all our addresses to his heavenly Majesty! And if we desire
this to be the case, let us *reverence our own consciences;* avoiding
every thing which would cause *our hearts to condemn us,* in the
presence of him who is *greater than our hearts, and knoweth all* 20, 21
things. And while we rejoice in this, that they do not *condemn us,*
let us be very careful that we examine them *thoroughly,* that we
be not imposed on by a false answer, as it is to be feared many,
through a superficial inquiry are, whose expectations are the most
sanguine, and whose pretensions are the loudest. Let us remem- 23
ber this great summary of Christian duty, *that we believe in the* 22
name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that we keep his commandments
and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. An obedience,
springing from such a faith, a faith verified by such an obe-
dience, will give us a comfortable hope, that our prayers shall be
accepted of God now, and our persons accepted hereafter to eter-
nal life. *Amen.*

SECT.

SECT. VI.

The Apostle cautions the Christian converts against being deceived by seducing spirits; and directs them how they may distinguish between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 John IV. 1—12.

1 JOHN IV. 1.

SECT. vi.

1 John IV. 1.

IT is necessary, my *beloved*, that in the circumstances in which we are placed, I should caution you against credulously submitting to every one who pretends a Divine inspiration for what he says: *believe not* therefore *every* pretended *spirit*[a]: *but make trial of the spirits, whether they be* indeed *of God* or not: *for* it is certain, that *many false prophets are gone forth into the world*, boasting a Divine mission, and thereby laying snares for the souls of men, with such artifice, that might, as our Lord expresses it, Mat. xxiv. 24, deceive the very elect if it were possible.

2 Now *in this ye know* and may distinguish *the Spirit of God*, which is the Spirit of truth, from that of error; *every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh*[b], that pays a becoming deference to his authority, and the Divine discoveries which he hath made, *is of God;* there cannot, in the general, be any better attestation of any spirit than this, that it tends, in its agency and operations, to promote the honour of the great Redeemer. *And* you may, on the other hand, be sure of this, that *every* pretended *spirit* of revelation, *that doth not confess* and do homage to *Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh, is not of God: and* indeed *this is* on the contrary *the* very [*spirit*] *of antichrist*[c], and

1 JOHN IV. 1.

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof

a *Believe not every spirit.*] Many pretended to the character of the Messiah, and others, in an extraordinary manner to be sent and inspired of God; and this they did with a view of turning away Christians from their faith and hope. The *apostle* here, by a short turn of argument demonstrates that they were indeed impostors from this very attempt.

b *That confesseth Jesus Christ, who is come in the flesh.*] So the words ο ομολογει Ιησουν Χριςον εν σαρκι ελυλυθοτα may very well be rendered; and indeed they must be so in this connection, for the bare confession of Christ's incarnation would not have been sufficient to have cleared them from the suspicion of being *impostors. To confess Jesus Christ,* seems to mean, not barely professing some kind of regard to him, but yielding a regular *consistent* homage, and, as it were *harmonizing* and falling in with his design.

c *This is the spirit of antichrist*] From hence some have argued, that the Pope cannot be antichrist, because he *confesses Christ;* and that it must necessarily be some

SECT. VI.

1 John IV. 3.

whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world.

of whom you have heard in the Divine oracles and predictions which our blessed Lord delivered concerning this last time *that he is coming, and is now* in some measure *already in the world.*

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

But, my *dear children, ye are of God, and have overcome them* in all their snares and delusions[d], *because greater* and more powerful by far *is he that is in you, than he that is in the world:* the Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostacy, and for all his confederates. 4

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

They of whom I have now been speaking, *are of the world,* and they know how to manage their affairs in a manner which will be pleasing to it: *therefore they speak* as *of the world,* as taking their instructions from it, they give their followers worldly hopes and expectations, *and the world* greedily *hears them,* and drinks in their fallacious maxims, to the unspeakable detriment of the interests of true religion. 5

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the

Where- as on the contrary, *we are of God,* and have approved ourselves to be so, by such irresistible evidence, that I may now venture to say, that *he who knoweth God,* and experiences the governing influence of Divine fear and love, *heareth* and regardeth *us*[e]; but *he who is not of God, doth not* attentively and obediently *hear us;* and by rejecting our testimony, attended with such evidence, proves himself destitute of all true religion. 6

some entirely *opposing* person or sect, and which does not bear the Christian name: but the interpretation above obviates this objection; for it is certain popery is an usurpation entirely inconsistent with a due *homage* to Christ, and founded upon principles most opposite to those of his government and religion. It is said to have been *already in the world,* as the ambitious, imposing, persecuting spirit, which is the very essence of antichristianism, did then greatly prevail.

d *Ye—have overcome them.*] That is, your doctrines have prevailed against some who deserve the name of antichrist, as undoubtedly all who opposed the Christian interest in some measure did; and as you have the true *miraculous* gifts of the spirit, to which they falsely pretend, it is soon seen, that the advantage is clearly on your side.

e *He who knoweth God, heareth us.*] Bishop *Bull* thinks, the meaning of this is, "Regard our temper and conduct, and compare it with that of those who oppose us, and you will find a *carnal* principle continually prevailing in them, and a *spiritual* principle governing us: in consequence of which you may know assuredly that *we* are *of God,* and *they of the world.*" Compare *Bull's Serm.* i. p. 11. I rather think, as Archbishop *Tillotson* has stated it, (Vol. III. p. 501.) He considers the Christian religion as now so abundantly *demonstrated,* that it might be made a *test* by which other doctrines and pretences might be tried; and to those who have received it upon full evidence, it must be so. Thus the Jews were directed to judge, and obliged to condemn, a *pretended* prophet, as *ipso facto,* proved an *impostor,* if he attempted to turn them aside from the *revelation* which God had given by Moses. Deut. xiii. 1—3.

SECT. VI. ligion. After such a series of miracles, as have been wrought in confirmation of the gospel, and other proofs attending it in their days, it may be laid down as a test; so that *by this we* may sufficiently *know*, and discern between *the spirit of truth and the spirit of error*, as the one receives, and the other rejects, this Divine system.

the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

1 John IV. 6.

7 But think it not enough speculatively to admit its authority. Let it be your great care practically to acknowledge it; and especially to the purposes of mutual benevolence. Yes, my *beloved, let us love one another*[f]; *for love is* as really *from God*, as truth itself; *and every one who loveth*, every one in whose heart this Divine principle reigns and triumphs over the selfish and contrary passions, shews by it that he *is born of God*, by his regenerating and transforming grace, *and* that he truly *knoweth God*; he makes it appear, that he judges rightly of God's nature and will; and that his acquaintance with him has made deep and powerful impressions

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 on his heart. Whereas *he who loveth not*, whatever he may pretend, *hath not* truly *known God; for God is love*, its great fountain and exemplar: he recommends it by his law, and produces and cherishes it by his influences; and the due contemplation of him will naturally inflame our hearts with love to his Divine Majesty, and to our fellow-creatures for his sake, whose crea-

8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love.

9 tures they are. And *in this* great instance *is the love of God*, of which I now speak, when I say that God is himself love, in the most illustrious manner *manifested*, and displayed *in* and towards *us, that God sent* Jesus *his only-begotten* and well-beloved *Son into the world, that we*, condemned and miserable sinners, *might live through him*; that the sentence of death to which we were obnoxious, might be reversed, that we might be quickened to a principle of spiritual life, and so conducted to the possession

9 In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 of life everlasting. Yes, Sirs, I must repeat it again, that your hearts, and my own, may be the more deeply affected with it, *herein is love, not* indeed *that we loved God*, for we were, on the contrary, in a state of enmity to him, in which,

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and

f *Let us love one another.*] It is reported, that when the apostle John was grown old, and past preaching, he used to be led to the *church* at Ephesus, and only say these words to the people, *Little children, love another.* And the importance of the argument by which he enforces *love*, justifies the repetition of it so frequently.

and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

which, unsolicited and untouched by his love and grace, we should have persisted and perished; *but that he loved us, and* in boundless compassion to our necessities and our miseries, *sent his Son* [*to be*] *a propitiation for our sins;* to make atonement to his injured justice for our offences, and so to introduce us on honourable terms to his favour. And let me make this important inference from it, my *beloved, if God so loved us, how ought we to love one another.* in imitation of his Divine example, from a sense of the happy state into which we are brought, and in gratitude to him for so inestimable a favour? And the inference has the greater weight, as *no man hath ever seen God*, or can see him, since he is in his own nature invisible, and possessed of such essential persections, that it is impossible that any expressions of love and duty from any of his creatures should in the least degree increase his happiness. But as he is the great fountain of benevolence, *if we love one another*, it appears that *God dwelleth in us, and* that *his love is perfected in us;* for this is the best proof we can give of our love to him, and of the prevalence of his grace in our hearts, transforming us into his image.

SECT. VI.

1 John IV. 10.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

11

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

12

IMPROVEMENT.

THE spirit of error has been working, in some measure, in all ages of the *church;* nor are we to wonder, if having infested that of the *apostles*, it be transmitted to our own. It is necessary therefore to *try the spirits, whether they be of God;* and we may safely try them by the *homage* they pay to *Christ*; and this not merely to his name, but to the *genius* of his religion, and to the great *standard* of it, which he hath left upon record in his word, that it might not be that *uncertain* thing which the fancies or traditions of fallible men might have rendered it. *Antichristian* principles and powers have arisen, but God has enabled, and he will enable the remnant of his people to *conquer them; for the spirit in them is greater than that which is in the world. That* may hearken to seducers as they accommodate their doctrine to its prevailing lusts and passions; but let *us* remember that the gospel is now established as a *test*, and may we admit, or reject, all *human* teachings, as they agree, or disagree with it.

Ver 1 2 3 4 5 6

If we read and hear it to any valuable purpose, it will teach us to *love one another:* that great lesson of our Divine Master, with

7

SECT. VI. relation to which we have *line upon line, and precept upon precept.* If we value ourselves in any degree upon *knowing God*, let us give
Ver. *this* proof of it, without which all our most subtile speculations or
8 debates concerning his nature and perfections will be utterly vain.
9 And that we may attain to this, let us frequently contemplate that incomparable display of *his love* towards us, *in sending his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.* Let us daily consider our lives as derived from that great act of mercy and grace ; and that it is through *Christ* alone, as thus given us of God, that we can obtain and secure life eternal, since in him we
10 receive the only appointed *propitiation for* those *sins*, which would otherwise have obstructed the passage of all good to us, even from the great eternal fountain of felicity. He hath prevented us with the blessings of his goodness : we did *not love him, but he first lov-*
10 *ed us.* O that this love on *his* part, may produce the warmest return on *ours !* and let us testify the sincerity of this affection, by remembering how it ought to influence our hearts to *benevo-*
11 *lence* as well as *devotion.* And as we *cannot see God at any time,*
12 nor extend any act of beneficence to him, let us see *his image* with due regard in every *Christian*, and in some degree in every *human creature*, that we may express our love to *him*, by doing good to *them for his sake.*

SECT. VII.

The Apostle further urges the excellence of love, as a substantial proof of our knowing God, and dwelling in him ; and as bringing the greatest honour to God, and affording the truest composure and confidence to the soul. 1 John IV. 13, *to the end.*

SECT. VII.

1 John IV. 13.

1 JOHN IV. 13.

1 John IV. 13. I HAVE been mentioning love as an argument of our union to God ; and I must now add, that *in this* also *we know, that we abide in him, and* that *he* dwelleth *in us, because he hath given to us* the communication *of his Spirit*, which operating in us by its gracious influences, sets as it were, the mark of God upon us, and thereby assures us that he owns us as his, and is be-
14 come our God : *And* animated and sealed by this Spirit, as *we have seen and* known by undoubted evidence ourselves, so we courageously *testify* to others, how hazardous soever the bearing that testimony may be, *that the* great almighty *Father* of all *hath sent* Jesus *the Son*, under

1 JOHN IV. 13. HEREBY know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit,

14 And we have seen and do testify that the

SECT. vii.

1 John IV. 14.

the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

under the high character of *the Saviour of the world*, and that it is in, and by him alone, how proudly soever the infidel world may reject and disdain him, that eternal salvation can be obtained. *Whosoever*, in a steady and uniform manner, *shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God*[a], maintaining this profession of faith with resolution and zeal, and acting in conformity to it, gives the happiest proof that *God dwelleth in him, and* that *he* dwelleth *in God:* there is a blessed union between God and his soul; so that it is in the language of scripture, (Isa. lvii. 15,) the habitation of God, and he may be said to be, as to his affections and hopes, with God in heaven, and shall ere long, in his complete person reside there. *And we have known, and firmly believed the love which God hath unto us;* for as we have again and again taught you, and know not how to cease inculcating it, *God is* himself *love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*[b]; this is the bond of union, and the pledge of its perpetuity. (Compare ver. 8. and 12.) And *herein is love perfected in us, that* notwithstanding all our acknowledged and lamented imperfections, *we may have boldness* and confidence *in the* great *day of* universal *judgment*[c], *in that as he* our Father and our God *is, so are we* in some prevailing degree, even while we reside *in this world*, so far as the imperfections of that mortal life, to which we are here confined, will admit.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

And happy are they, who are arrived to such a temper and character as this; for *there is no* servile and abject *fear in love, but perfect love casteth out* such *fear* from the soul, in which it resides.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because

a *Whosoever shall confess,* &c.] Bishop *Hopkins*, accounts for *this*, and *such* passages, by observing, that in the *primitive* times there were no *temporal* inducements to embrace Christianity; and consequently *most* of the professors of it acted upon conscience, and it might be charitably hoped they were indeed *regenerate*. See his *Works*, p. 520.

b *Dwelleth in God, and God in him.*] Perhaps when John wrote this *epistle*, he might refer to that excellent *prayer* of our blessed Lord, which he has recorded in *his gospel*, and to such passages of it as John xvii. 22, 23.

c *In the day of judgment.*] Some by this phrase understand *the day* in which Christians were judged: as if it had been said, The perfection of *love* is, when it induces us to maintain the cause of Christ before *judges* and *persecutors*, that we may be conformed to him, whose life was in a manner a continued series of sufferings; whereas the violent *fear of death*, which, where it prevails, is a *tormenting* passion, is inconsistent with the perfect love of Christ. This is the sense which Dr. *Bates* gives to this passage. *Bates's Works*, p. 924. But the *day of judgment* has generally a different signification from what this explication gives it; and therefore I chuse to *paraphrase* the words after the manner in which they are *usually* understood.

d *How*

SECT. VII.

resides. And this is a very desirable effect; *because fear hath torment*, it throws the mind into a most uneasy situation; but *he that feareth, is not made perfect in love.* Study therefore to increase more and more in that noble affection of love to God, and you will find your self-enjoyment rising in proportion to it. And reflect upon this with all humility, that if we do indeed experience any thing of that Divine principle in our hearts, we must freely acknowledge, that *we love him, because he first loved us.* He hath not only given us natures capable of these sublime actings, and poured in upon us, from their first original, numberless providential bounties, but hath also appointed his Son, to lay a foundation for our happiness in his own blood, and his spirit, to diffuse that grace in our hearts, by which they are formed to every sentiment of pious gratitude.

1 John IV. 18. because fear hath torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

And let this also be remembered, as of the last importance, that *if any one say, I love God, and hateth his brother*, how high soever his pretences to devotion may be, and to whatever fervour he may carry his zeal, *he is a liar;* for it is impossible, that the love of God should be sincere in the soul, which is destitute of this brotherly affection; as will appear, if you consider what peculiar advantages we have for engaging our hearts towards those with whom we are conversant; *for how can he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen*[d] *?* The invisible nature of the Divine Being is in this respect, an obstacle, which our weak and carnal minds cannot be expected easily to conquer; *And* it is certain, that the neglect of this benevolent disposition would be an high instance of disobedience to him, since *we have this* express *commandment from him, that he who loveth God*, and professeth himself religious, *should also love his brother.* And God hath hereby in effect declared, that he

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also.

d *How can he, who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God,* &c.] Mr. Howe observes, that the apostle seems to take it for granted, that we are *more disposed* to the love of our *fellow-creatures* than to the love of *God.* Mr. *Seed* has charmingly illustrated this *text;* (Ser. Vol. I. p. 390;) and observes, that we rise to the *love of God* from the *love of our fellow-creatures;* as to the *knowledge* of God, by the knowledge of the creatures. Hardly any *text* was ever more fully illustrated than this, in those *posthumous sermons* of the great Mr. Howe, which were published by Mr. Fletcher.

he will treat those as his enemies, who pretend to devout zeal, while they are destitute of brotherly love. SECT. vii.

IMPROVEMENT.

THAT all these *repeated exhortations* may not be entirely in vain, let us now call our hearts to a deep and affectionate contemplation of the astonishing *love of God, that he hath sent even his Son to be the Saviour of the world*, according to the testimony of this *Divine herald*, who *beheld his glory*, and witnessed it to be such a glory, as became *the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (John i. 14.) Ver. 14

Let us think of the world as *lost*, of the whole race of rational creatures in it as *perishing*, as going down to eternal perdition. But a *Saviour* is provided: and O, what a Saviour? *The Son of God*, that almighty Deliverer, to whom our salvation was dearer than his own life. So dear, that he was willing to be invested with mortal flesh, in order that he might be capable of enduring pain and death for our redemption. Have we not herein *seen and known the love of God to us?* That love, wherewith he has so graciously prevented us; for surely nothing can be more apparent than this, that if we do indeed *love him* sincerely and faithfully, it *is because he hath first loved us.* And therefore, instead of boasting of our love to him, as if we could make him our debtor, let us humbly acknowledge that he is the great Original and support of that beautifying affection of the human mind; and that our obligations to *him* are *great*, in proportion to the degree in which we feel it working in us. Let us be encouraged boldly to *confess Christ as the Son of God.* Let us seek after more *perfect love* to him, and to the Father, as that which tends to make the mind happy by *casting out* every *tormenting* passion, and to establish it in an humble *boldness* amidst the most awful prospects. It is matter of deep lamentation, that our spirits should be so degenerate, as that while we are strongly impressed by *sensible* objects, we should be the less inclined to love the blessed *God*, because he is an *invisible* being. Ver. 16, 19, 15, 17, 20

Let us adore his goodness, that in condescension to our weakness, he hath made himself *visible* in the person of *his Son*; and as *Christ* has constituted our brethren, in some degree *his representatives*, to receive as in his name, the tokens of our kindness and affection, let us be studious, by our *love to them*, and particularly to the *poor among* them, who have peculiarly this honour; let us I say, be studious to approve the sincerity of that *love to him* Ver. 21

SECT. vii. *him*, which we so universally profess, and the absence of which were so inexcusably criminal.

SECT. VIII.

The Apostle farther discourses of the character of those who are born of God, particularly describing them as lovers of Christ, as conquerors of the world, and as courageously maintaining the gospel; on the witnesses to which, both in heaven and on earth, he more especially enlarges. 1 John V. 1—12.

1 JOHN V. 1.

SECT. viii. HAVING been discoursing of the privileges of the children of God, let me a little farther illustrate, and remind you of the great essentials of their character, that you may judge the better of your own concern in what is said. And here nothing is of more importance than to observe, that *every one who* truly *believeth that Jesus is the Christ*, so as to have his heart duly affected with the belief, without which faith does not deserve its name, *is born of God*[a]: he is brought to that Divine temper by the influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart, and in consequence of this he may be assured of his adoption. *And every one who loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten by him*: we naturally love the children of our common friends, and much more will the children of our heavenly Father be dear to us, if we bear a becoming affection to him. And we may take the same truth likewise the other way, and say, that *in this we know that we love the children of God, if we love God, and keep his commandments*[b]. For

1 John V. 1.

1 JOHN V. 1.
WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

a *Is born of God.*] It is probable the *apostle* may here refer to the vain *boasts* which the Jews made of being *the children of God*, while they set Christ at defiance, and poured the greatest infamy on his name and cause. Mr. Locke quotes this place to prove that this was the only *fundamental* of the gospel; but it is evident, this proposition may be understood in very *different* senses; and consequently there is no room to lay all the stress that he supposes may be laid on such an expression.

b *In this we know that we love the children of God, &c.*] Dr. *Clarke* supposes this clause to be transposed, and that it should be read, "*By this we know that we love God, and keep his commandments, because we love his children.*" *Posth. Serm.* Vol. II. p. 102. To the common reading it has been *objected*, that the medium is more *obscure*, than the thing to be learnt from it. Dr. Bates answers, that the apostle speaks concerning our knowing that our *love* to the brethren is of the true Christian stamp: now a strong internal principle *of love to God* may be more self-evident to the mind, as less in danger of being confounded with a merely human affection, or benevolent instinct. *Bates's Works*, p. 695. Some have queried, whether it might not be translated, *Hereby, even in that we love the children of God, do we know that we love God, and keep his commandments.*

For certainly if our love to the children of God arise from truly religious motives, it will be an uniform thing, and all the other precepts of God will have a suitable influence upon our hearts and lives; whereas any pretended benevolence of temper, which leaves us rebels to the authority of the common Father of the family, is a mere natural impulse, and deserves not the noble name of brotherly love. Wonder not, that I insist so much on the influence of religious principles on the life and conversation. *For this is the love of God*, this is the great evidence we are to give of it, *that we* impartially *keep* all *his commandments*, without allowing ourselves in the violation of any one of them. *And* to a mind influenced by true love, *his commandments are not grievous;* as they are all most equitable, reasonable, and gracious in themselves, all adapted to promote the true happiness of our lives, so we shall find, that fervent love will make them all pleasant and delightful to us. *Because*, whereas the great obstruction to keeping God's commandments is the influence of worldly motives and considerations on the mind, *whatever is born of God*, every son and daughter of his, not excepting even the feeblest, *conquers the world*, and would despise and trample upon all the glories of universal empire, if opposed to the favour of his heavenly Father. *And this is the* great *victory that conquers the world*, the grand triumphant principle which accomplishes things which appear so incredible, [*even our* firm *faith* in the great articles of the Christian religion; particularly, that Christ is the Son of God, that he came into the world to redeem us from its lusts and vanities, and that he will assuredly conduct all his people to seats of infinitely greater and nobler felicity. And indeed, as this is the happiness of true Christians, so only of them; for *who is he that conquers the world, except* it be *he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* The great principles peculiar to our Divine religion, a sense of redeeming love, and the prospect of such a sublime and perpetual happiness as the gospel opens upon us, can alone be sufficient to teach us to triumph over these transitory vanities, and to establish an uniform character, superior to the variety

SECT. VIII.

1 John V. 2.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

SECT. viii.

1 John v. 5.

variety of temptations with which we can be assaulted: while the boasted triumphs of others, upon meaner principles, have been very partial and imperfect, and they have evidently been subdued by one vanity, while they have gloried in despising another.

6 *This* Jesus, of whom we have now been speaking, *is he who came by water, and* by *blood*[c], even *Jesus the Christ*, whose great design it was both to cleanse and purify his people, and to make an atonement to God, for their sins. He came *not by water only*, did not only instruct men in the purest morals, or set them the most perfect and complete example; *but by water and blood.* He shed his most precious blood to expiate our offences, and God gave as it were, a sensible intimation of these united purposes, when there came out of his wounded side, a stream of blood and water, which descended in such a manner, as that each might evidently be distinguished from the other. *And the Spirit is that which witnesseth*, the extraordinary communication of the Spirit to his servants is the most glorious attestation of all; *for* we well know, that *the Spirit is truth*; and when we consider the wonderful manner of its interposition, we can no longer doubt of the truth of whatever shall be attested by such an authority.

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 And indeed, when I consider this, I may say, that whereas the law admitted the concurrent testimony of two witnesses as valid, we have, as it were, a double trinity of witnesses, one in heaven, and the other on earth, to support this most momentous truth. *For there are three, who bear witness* to it[d], [*in heaven, the Father*, by whom the scheme of our salvation was originally projected, and who revealed it so early to the church by the prophets; *the* Divine *Word*, whose great business it was, by such humiliations, labours and sufferings, to bring it into

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

c *Came by water and blood.*] I think it a great mistake of Mr. Cradock and some others, to imagine that this relates to *external washing* and Jewish sacrifices.

d *There are three who bear witness, &c.*] As it would be altogether unfit to introduce into such short *notes* as these are intended to be, a *critical* dissertation upon the authority of this *celebrated text*; I shall content myself with referring to what so many learned persons as have engaged in the controversy, have written on each side: but I thought myself obliged to intimate such a remaining *doubt* at least, concerning its authenticity, as I have done by inclosing it in *crotchets*. I am persuaded the words contain an important truth; but whether they have been added by some, or omitted by others, contrary to the *original copy*, I will not pretend to determine.

e *The*

into execution; *and the Holy Spirit*[e], who seals and applies it to believers; *and these three are one*, as in the agreement of their testimony, so likewise in the perfections of their nature, and each worthy of those Divine honours, which cannot be communicated to any creature. *And there are three on earth who bear witness,*] *the Spirit*, sent down from heaven in its sanctifying and miraculous operations, which still continue to produce the noblest effect; *and the water* of baptism, *and the* representation made of Christ's *blood*, in the sacramental wine[f], which are intended, throughout all ages, to keep up the remembrance of these wonderful facts, and to bear, as it were, their testimony to this mysterious Person, who united in himself humanity and deity, and came by water, and by blood; *and these three agree in one;* they join to advance the same end, by establishing the gospel in the world. And *if we receive the testimony of men*, which in many cases we cannot, without the most palpable absurdity reject, surely *the testimony of God is* worthy of infinitely *greater* credit; *for this is the testimony of God, which he hath witnessed concerning his Son*, recommending him thereby to our most dutiful and obedient regard; that by a firm faith in him, and adherence to him, we may conquer the world, and all the enemies of our salvation. *He, who* upon this testimony *believeth in the Son of God*, hath not only an external evidence to produce, which may suffice for the conviction and condemnation of the unbelieving world, but from the time in which he experiences the efficacy of his faith, *hath* also *the witness within himself*[g]: the happy change it makes in the whole

SECT. viii.

1 John V. 7.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

8

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son,

9

10 He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the

10

e *The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.*] *The Father*, Mat. iii. 16, 17, xvii. 5; John xii. 28. The *Word* himself, Acts vii. 55, 56; ix. 3, 4; Rev. i. 10, &c. The *Holy Ghost*, John i. 32, 33.

f *The water and the blood.*] By the *water*. Mr. Jeffries understands the *baptism* of Christ, and the miracles which were wrought on that occasion, as the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven; and by the *blood the death of Christ*, which he willingly suffered, and demonstrated thereby that he was no *impostor*, especially as he predicted so many extraordinary circumstances attending it. See his *Review of the Controversy with Collins*. Others interpret the blood here spoken of, of the *blood* of the *martyrs* shed in confirmation of Christianity, and the *water*, of the purity of the lives of Christians. I confess it is a *difficult* text; but on the whole, prefer the sense given in the *paraphrase*.

g *Hath the witness within himself.*] Some have considered and explained this, as if the meaning were, that *every Christian* did in those days receive some miraculous proofs of his religion, by some communication of the *extraordinary gifts* of the Spirit; in consequence of which he might by looking within himself, know the *certainty* of the gospel. But I think this assertio

SECT. VIII.

whole state of his soul, manifests the excellence and reality of its object. But *he that believeth not God*, offers him the grossest and most insufferable affront, for he in effect *makes him a liar:* charges him with attesting the most notorious falsehood in the most solemn manner; *because he hath not believed in the testimony which God hath testified concerning his Son*, by so many prophecies, and other miraculous interpositions, to demonstrate the truth of his mission. So that if this may be rejected, it cannot be conceived how he should ever be able to give any convincing proof, that he testifies any thing at all.

1 John V. 10.

the record that God gave of his Son.

11 *And this is*, in one word, *the* substance and abridgement of this *testimony*, *that* the blessed *God hath*, in his infinite condescension and bounty, *given unto us* the promises of *eternal life; and this life is in his Son;* purchased by him, and laid up in him, to be bestowed according to his pleasure; and therefore only to be obtained through him. So that *he who hath* an interest in *the Son* by a lively and operative faith *hath* this eternal *life*, in the sure pledges and beginnings of it in his own heart, and shall shortly enter on the complete enjoyment, though in himself acknowledged to be ever so unworthy of it; and *he who hath not* an interest in *the Son of God, hath not life*, whatever proud conceit he may entertain of his own merits and excellencies; but on the contrary, remains exposed to the righteous displeasure of God, and under a sentence of eternal death.

11 And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us regard the grand question, on which our life, our eternal life, is suspended! *I mean, whether we have, or have not, the Son of God?* Let us then examine into this important matter with the greatest attention. Let us hearken to, and receive the *testimony of God*, as commprehended in this one word, *that God hath given even to us*, dying, perishing men, *eternal life; and this life is in his Son.* Let us receive this transcendent gift with all humility and thankfulness; and so much the rather, as it is given us

Ver. 11

assertion incapable of being proved, either from *this passage* or any other; and can prefer no sense of this *celebrated text* to that which Dr. Watts has so largely established and illustrated in his *sermons* upon it; to which therefore I refer my *readers* with the utmost satisfaction *Watts's Sermon*, Vol. I. Ser. i.—iii.

us *in him.* By firmly *believing this*, we shall *conquer the world*, and gain a victory of an infinitely different and more exalted nature, than they who are strangers to *Christ*, or who reject him, ever have done, or can possibly do. SECT. viii. Ver. 4

May our stedfast *faith in him* furnish us with a substantial attestation that we are *born of God;* and may we prove it to be sincere, by *loving the children of God, and by keeping all his commandments.* We must surely acknowledge, that his commandments are reasonable; and if we have a genuine *love to God* existing in our hearts, it will render the observance of them *pleasant* and delightful. And if we are not possessed of that evidence of love, which arises from a disposition to obedience, let us remember, he hath fairly and frequently warned us, that *no other* expressions of love, how fervent and pathetic soever, will be accepted or allowed by him. That our faith may be confirmed, and our love awakened, let us often look to *Christ*, as coming *by water*, and *by blood.* Let us meditate on *that mysterious* stream of *blood* and *water*, which came forth from his wounded side. Let us solemnly remind ourselves of the *baptismal water*, in which we were washed, and of the *sacred cup, the communion of the blood of Christ*, referring to this great important event. And while we are contemplating the *memorial* of his humility, let us also consider him as *one* with the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit;* and as each of the *sacred three* join their *testimony* to the truth of the gospel, and join their kind offices for supplying to us the invaluable blessings of it, let us joyfully ascribe *glory to each, world without end. Amen.* 1 5 6 7 8

SECT. IX.

The Apostle concludes his epistle; declaring its general design to be the confirmation of their faith; and reminding them of the encouragement they had to hope, that their prayers should be heard, for themselves, and for others, who had not sinned unpardonably. And he then adds a reflection on the happy difference which the knowledge of God in Christ made between them, and an ignorant and wicked world. 1 John V. 13, *to the end.*

1 JOHN V. 13.

THESE things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal

1 JOHN V. 13.

SECT. ix.

AND now, to draw towards a conclusion; *these things have I written to you, who believe in the name of the Son of God,* to confirm your faith, and establish your joy, *that ye may know, that,* if your attachment to him is of the right kind, *you have,* in consequence of it, an interest in *eternal life; and that,* this hope operating 1 John V. 13.

SECT. ix.

rating to produce the substantial fruits of genuine and universal obedience, *ye may* yet more fully and stedfastly *believe on the* mighty and Divine *name of the Son of God*[a]. Then you may be assured of the certain truth of his religion, in proportion to the degree in which you inwardly experience its noble effects; and may in consequence of this, keep your hearts continually fixed upon him, in the many important views in which faith exhibits him. *And this is the confidence which we have towards him*, as our prevalent Intercessor and mighty Saviour at God's right hand: *that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*[b] graciously; that he observes and takes notice of all our petitions. *And* we are sure his is not an ineffectual notice; for *if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know* as a farther consequence, since he is ever able to carry all his gracious purposes into immediate execution, that *we shall* certainly *have* an accomplishment of *those petitions which we have asked of him*[c]; supposing, as I said before, they are agreeable to his will; and it is always his will, that his people should be truly happy, and be supplied with every necessary good.

1 John V. 13.

14

15

16 And let me now add one precaution, with regard to the cases, in which it may be proper to remember offenders in our prayers: *if any one see his brother commit a sin, [which is] not unto death*, that is, any sin, but that which is marked out

eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he

a *That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*] It is manifest, the *apostle* does not in this *epistle*, to establish their faith, produce the *evidences* of christianity, and argue upon them. But the *good dispositions*, which his whole discourse has a tendency to promote, would certainly have a strong influence to *confirm* their faith; as such dispositions would appear to be the effect of the *gospel*; and as an ardent zeal in the teachers of the gospel to promote them, was a strong confirmation of their being *faithful witnesses* to the great facts which had before been received upon their credit. I look upon this as a strong text to prove, in opposition to what Dr. Whitby has advanced, that Christians are urged in the *New Testament*, *to believe in Jesus Christ.*

b *That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*] Archbishop Tillotson supposes this refers particularly to the *apostles*. (Compare Mat. xviii. 18, 19; John xiv. 13, 14; xvi. 23, 24.) But so few of the apostles could be concerned in this advice of St. John, and there are so many promises of the *answer of prayer* scattered up and down in the *Old and New Testament*, (see Dr. *Clark, on the Promises*, cap. iii. § vi.) that I would by no means thus confine the interpretation.

c *If we know that he heareth—we shall have the petitions.*] *Hearing* cannot, in the preceding verse, signify merely *knowing what we say*; for then there would be no reason to limit the assertion to our asking any thing *according to his will*: and it may seem, that if we take it for *answering our petitions*, it is a mere *tautology*: it is therefore necessary to interpret the former clause of *taking notice of us*, the other of *operating* in consequence of that notice. The *almighty power* of God to fulfil all his gracious *purposes* in favour of his people, seems to be the *medium* on which the *inference* is grounded.

he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

out in the awful words of our Lord Jesus Christ as unpardonable; *he shall ask, and* may hope that, through the Divine goodness, *he shall give him life:* he may cheerfully expect, that God will return in mercy *to those who sin, not unto death. There is* indeed *a sin,* [*that is,*] *unto death,* I mean such an apostacy from Christianity, as is attended with blaspheming the operations of the Spirit of God, and ascribing them to Satan; and *I say not, that he,* whose aid may be requested on such a sad occasion, *should pray concerning that*[d]; for Christ has told us it shall never be forgiven in this world, or the next. And as nothing but a miracle of Divine grace, never to be expected, can recover a person in such circumstances, it is better to wave the petition, how much soever we may be disposed to lament the misery of the unhappy creature who is fallen into it. *Every* instance of *unrighteousness is* indeed *sin,* and every breach of his law must be displeasing to God, and be esteemed matter of just censure and lamentation; *but there is a sin, not unto death,* in the sense just assigned. There are indeed many, from which it evidently appears, that persons may be recovered; and in all such cases, Christian charity will require you to pray for your brethren. And from this dreadful evil Divine grace will preserve every good man; for *we know that whoever is born of God, does not sin,* in this terrible and ruinous manner; *but he who is born of God,* diligently *keepeth himself* from it, *and* Satan *the wicked one,* who is the great abettor of all evil, *doth not touch,* or come near *him,* but is immediately repelled in his first assaults.

SECT. ix.

1 John V. 16.

17 All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death. 17

18 We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 18

d *I say not that he should pray concerning that.*] It seems to be intended as a brand set on a person who had been guilty of the *sin here specified,* that he was not to be *prayed for* by his converted *fellow-Christians.* Some indeed would interpret this sin of the more *heinous* kind of offences punishable with death by *human* laws: but I can see no sort of reason for refusing the charity of our prayers to persons in such circumstances. Others think it refers to the case of *illness;* but there is no express mention of it here; and it seems to have been taken for granted without reason, that *this text* is parallel to James v. 14, 15. It is certain, that *illness* in case of a *capital* crime, would not delay the execution. The popish distinction between *mortal* and *venial* sins will however appear to have no foundation in this text upon the interpretation we have given, or indeed upon any we have mentioned. The chief difficulty remaining is, how it could be known, that the *apostacy* in question was attended with such circumstances as made it the *unpardonable sin?* Where it was most difficult to distinguish, the *gift of discerning spirits,* might infallibly decide; where it was dubious, *charity* would incline to the *milder* extreme; and *conditional* prayer might however be offered.

e *The*

SECT. ix.

saults. *We* Christians do indeed *know, that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*[e]: it is in subjection to the wicked one, and lies wounded and slain under him. *But we* 20 *know, that* when the whole human race was in this helpless and miserable condition, *the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true,* even in the Father, and *in his Son Jesus Christ: he is the true God and eternal life*[f]; he partakes with the Father in proper deity; and our immortal life is supported by union with him.

1 John V. 19.

21 See to it, therefore, my dear *little children,* that you adhere to the worship of this true God alone, and *keep yourselves from idols*[g] of every kind; whom the jealous God will not suffer to share with him, either in the offices of religious worship, or in the supreme affection of the mind. *Amen,* may you be so kept and preserved to eternal life!

19 *And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true: *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us thankfully own the Divine goodness, in giving us so many helps for the confirmation of our *faith;* and learn the importance of its being thus confirmed, from that variety of provision made

e *The world lieth in wickedness:* ο κοσμος ολος εν τω πονηρω κειται.] The *whole world* here, as the *whole creation,* Rom. viii. 12, signifies that part of the world in which Christianity was not received.—Some imagine, that by the *world's lying in wickedness,* εν τω πονηρω, the *apostle* refers to the abandoned wickedness of the Roman emperors, by whose means the most enormous impiety and immorality was propagated through the whole empire by *præfects, officers,* and *soldiers. Gosp. Truth Vindic.* p. 174. Mr. *Reynolds,* who supposes that *hell* is situated in the *air,* observes, that the *earth,* on that *hypothesis,* lies, as it were, in the *suburbs* and *frontiers* of it. See his *Enquiries concerning the Angelic world,* p. 191. But I rather think the word κειται alludes to the circumstance of a body which *lies slain;* in which sense it is often used by Homer; and on this interpretation it gives us a most compassionable idea of the great misery and helpless state of mankind, *fallen* by the stroke of this formidable enemy, the *wicked one,* (ο πονηρος,) and insulted over by him as his prey.

f *This is the true God.*] To paraphrase this of the *true religion,* as a very celebrated *divine* does, is quite enervating the force of scripture, and taking a liberty with plain words by no means to be allowed. It is an argument of the *Deity of Christ,* which almost all those who have wrote in its defence have urged; and which, I think, none who have opposed it, have so much as appeared to answer.

g *Keep yourselves from idols.*] Archbishop *Tillotson,* (Vol. II. p. 488, who interprets *the sin unto death,* as signifying total *apostacy* from the Christian religion to the heathen idolatry, urges this clause, the connection of which with the context he thinks not else to be accounted for, as proof of it. But a man might commit the *sin unto death* by falling back into Judaism, though guilty of no *idolatry;* and the caution here suggested, may be very well accounted for, from the general circumstances of the *church* near that time, even though there should be no such immediate connection between *this clause* and the *preceding context,* as the Archbishop supposes.

made for its establishment. The declared end of *the apostle* in writing this epistle was, *that they who believed in the name of the Son of God, might* more firmly *believe in it. Lord, increase our faith*, and with it our zeal for him, in whose name we believe, and our love to each other, for his sake: then shall we have *eternal life the gift of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord*; and in the mean time may address the throne with chearfulness, and present *our petitions* in a pleading and confident hope, *that asking what is agreeable to his will*; and all that he knows to be subservient to our truest interest is so, *he will hear us, and we shall receive the things that we ask.* Encouraged by this promise, with what *boldness* may we come *to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in every time of need!* (Heb. iv. 16.) Let his compassion to us teach us to have compassion on *our brethren*, on our afflicted *brethren*; yea on those, whose *miscarriages* have evidently brought their afflictions upon them. Let us not too soon pronounce the case of a sinner *hopeless*; but rather subject ourselves to the trouble of some *fruitless* attempts to reclaim him, than omit any thing where there may be a *possibility* of succeeding. May Divine grace awaken all to stand at the remotest distance, not only from the *unpardonable sin*, but from whatever might dishonour God, and endanger our own souls: for *every sin* is deadly and malignant, though every one be not *the sin unto death.* May we keep ourselves, and be kept by Divine grace, in such a manner, that *the wicked one may not touch us*; but all his attempts be turned into his own shame and confusion!

SECT. ix.

Ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

And O, may God excite our pity to a *world which lies in wickedness*; and animate us to use our utmost endeavours, to *recover those out of the snare of the devil, who are led captive by him at his pleasure.* (2 Tim. ii. 26.) May we be made sensible of the rich and distinguishing grace of God, if we can say that we are, not only by an external profession, but an inward union, *in him that is true in the Lord Jesus Christ.* Him let us adore, as with *the Father*, and *the Holy Spirit, the true God.* Him let us seek, as *eternal life*; and let us *keep ourselves from* all those *idols*, which would alienate our regard from God, and by the pursuit of which our *eternal life* might in any degree be endangered.

19, 21

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

THESE epistles have been both very improperly ranked under the denomination, *general* or *catholic;* since each is inscribed to a single person; one to a woman of distinction, styled here the *elect lady;* and the other to Gaius; probably the same person with Gaius of Corinth, who is styled by St. Paul his *host*, and is celebrated for his hospitality to the brethren; a character very agreeable to that which is here given of Gaius by the apostle John.

There is no fixing the *date* of these two epistles with any certainty. It in a great measure depends on the date of the *first* epistle; soon after which, it is generally agreed, both these were written. And this indeed appears exceeding probable, from that coincidence both of sentiment and expression, which occurs in all these *epistles;* and from hence it is inferred, that the state of things in the Christian church, referred to in these *smaller epistles*, was very much the same as it was at the time of writing the *first* epistle, and that the apostle having *lately* written it, had it now particularly in his view, and the sentiments and expressions of it present to his mind. And possibly about the same time that he sent his *first* epistle to Christians in *general*, he might send his *second* to this honoured lady, and his *third* to his friend Gaius in particular, as a mark of peculiar regard. I shall not here enter into the debate concerning the *authenticity* of these two epistles, especially as I have already suggested on some former occasions, such general sentiments as are very applicable on this.

The brevity of these *epistles* render it needless to give any other analysis of them than I have done in the *contents* prefixed to each respectively; to which I refer the reader.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

St. JOHN.

SECT. I.

The Apostle John, addressing himself to a worthy Christian lady, expresses his joy in her good character, and that of her children; exhorts to continued love, and to guard against deceivers, whom it would be dangerous to countenance and encourage; referring what he had farther to say till he should make her a visit.—— 2 John *throughout.*

2 JOHN 1.

THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in

2 JOHN 1.

THIS letter is addressed by John, well known in these parts by the name of *the Elder*[a] called under that character, to preside in the churches,

SECT. I.

2 John I. 1.

a *The Elder.*] The concealment of the *name* of the author can be no objection against ascribing it to St. John; since his name is also concealed in the *first epistle*, which is universally allowed to be his. Nor was it customary with *this apostle*, in any of his writings, to be free in mentioning his own name. His styling himself the *elder* in this and the following epistle, is probably the reason why they were ascribed by some of the *ancients* not to the apostle John, universally acknowledged to be the author of the *first* epistle, but to John, an *elder* or *presbyter* of Ephesus. He who would see the testimonies of the *fathers*, that the apostle John was the author of these two epistles, may consult the second part of Dr. *Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History.* There can hardly be stronger internal arguments, that the three epistles, now commonly ascribed to St. John, were the production of the same author, than may be derived from that very remarkable similarity of sentiment and *phraseology* which appears in them all, on the slightest attention.

b *The*

SECT. I.

churches, *to the elect lady*[b], whom I need not name, as her excellent christian graces render her so gloriously distinguished; *and to her children whom I love in the truth,* on those principles which the gospel, the great system of truth, requires with respect to those who so remarkably support and adorn it. *Nor* indeed do *I only* love her and them, *but* they are beloved *also* by *all those who know the truth,* and who have had any opportunity of forming any intimate acquaintance with them. These amiable persons are justly dear to us all, *because of the truth which dwelleth in us, and* I doubt not *shall be in us for ever.* And particularly so deeply is it grounded in your mind and heart, that I am persuaded the relish of it will never be lost, be the remaining years of life ever so many, or the events of them ever so trying. May a rich assemblage of every desirable blessing, *grace, mercy,* [*and*] *peace, be with you* all *from God the Father* of all, *and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father;* and may it animate you to walk *in truth, and* in universal *love,* according to the tenor of that glorious gospel with which he hath favoured you.

2 John 1, 1.

in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

2 For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

I rejoiced greatly, when, in some of those excursions which I made for the service of the gospel, *I found some of thy children walking in* a manner agreeable to the system of Divine *truth,* and *according to the commandment which we have received from* God *the Father. And now I beseech thee,* my dear and honoured *lady, not as writing to thee a new* and unknown *commandment, but that which we had from the beginning* of our acquaintance with our Divine Master, and the religion he came to introduce, *that we may* all *love one another. And this is* that *love* which alone can prove acceptable to him, *that we* should constantly *walk according to his commandments;* and *this is the commandment, as ye have heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it;* this was the great end of the gospel, to give us proper directions for our conduct

4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

b *The elect lady.*] Lord *Barrington* is of opinion, the *lady* here spoken of is the *church* at Jerusalem, *sister* to that at Ephesus. *Barr. Miscel. Sacr.* p. 51, and the notion seems to have been taken from Dr. Whitby. Compare Isaiah. liv. 1; Gal. iv. 24, &c. But the arguments are by no means convincing: and verse 13, seems a strong objection against it. It is probable that this *lady* (stiled here ἐκλεκτὴ κυρία, from whence some have fancied her *proper name* was *Eclecta*, and others, *Cyria,*) was a person of considerable distinction.

c *Come*

duct, and motives to engage us to act accordingly. And these rules and principles have been, so plainly and faithfully delivered to you, that I need not now say any thing more in relation to them. SECT. i. 2 John 6.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

I refer you to those sacred lessons into which at your first conversion to Christianity, you were initiated; *because many deceivers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* [c]. And *this is* a most certain mark of *a deceiver and an antichrist;* and if any would go about to refine upon the doctrine of the incarnation and passion of our blessed Redeemer, as if they were allegorical, and expressed mere appearances, and not realities, whatever sublime notions he may pretend, he is to be rejected with abhorrence. Let me therefore beseech you, and all my Christian friends, to whom this letter may come, that ye *look to yourselves*, and let us all attend to the caution, *that we may not lose the things we have* already *wrought* in the service of Christ, *but* persevering and abounding in it, *may receive the ample reward* which I trust through Divine grace is laid up for us. For it is certain, that *every one who* in this respect *transgresseth and remaineth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not* an interest in *God;* but *he that remaineth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son* whose cause and whose favour are inseparable. *And if any one come unto you,* under the character of a religious teacher, *and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into* [*your*] *house,* to give him countenance and support, *neither wish him good success* [d]. *For he that* thus supports and maintains him, and *wisheth him good success,* in a case like this, though he does

7

8 Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

8

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

9

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed.

10

11 For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

11

c *Come in the flesh.*] The Apostle here alludes to the *rise* of those heretics who affirmed that Christ only came in *appearance.*

d *Wish him good success.*] Thus the Jews, as Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Whitby observe, were forbid to say אישך, or *God-speed, to an excommunicated,* person, or to come within *four cubits* of an heretic. But the apostle must not be here understood, as excluding the common *offices of humanity* to such persons: for that is contrary to all the *general* precepts of benevolence to be found in the gospel. But to have received a seducing teacher *into their houses,* and have given him suitable accommodations, would have been showing him such regard, and affording him such support, as indeed, in some measure would have made them answerable for the mischief he might do in the church; such favours being not merely offices of common humanity, but of *patronage and friendship;* and in the general, at least a testimony of their approbation, as well as kindness.

SECT. i.

does not actually engage himself to labour in it, *is partaker of his evil deeds*, and in the sight of God and man, accessory to the damage, which such a seducer may, in consequence of such encouragement, bring upon the church.

2 John 11.

12 *Having many* other *things to write unto you*, which might have employed my pen in a much longer epistle, *I would not* [*do it*] *with paper and ink; but* break off here, as *I hope* ere long *to* open my mind much more largely when I *come to you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be fulfilled;* and we may have mutual reason to acknowledge, that we have received much greater satisfaction than this imperfect method
13 of converse can afford. In the mean time, I shall only add, that *the children of thine elect, sister salute thee*, and I join with them in the kindest wishes which the sincerest friendship can form. And may God accomplish them. *Amen.*

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 LET us observe this delineation of a *love truly Christian;* the
2 love, which the *apostle, and all who knew the truth*, are said to have had towards *this elect* and excellent *lady, for the truth's sake which dwelt in her.* Adored be that grace, which preserved her in so high a rank of life, from temptations which could not fail to surround her! that grace, which rendered her an example of wisdom and piety, great and eminent in proportion to her exalted situation!

Nor can we forbear reflecting, *how happy*, in consequence of
3 this, she herself was, possessed of *grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, in truth and love!* What were all the secular *honours* by which she was distinguished! What the possession of *riches*, which in their own nature, and unimproved to the pious and charitable purposes to which she improved them, are very empty and unsatisfactory; what are *these*, when compared with such *important blessings!* We cannot but rejoice, at this distance of time, and ignorant as we are of the name, situation, and history, *of this worthy lady, that her chil-*
4 *dren walked in the truth.* It was a singular joy to John, and may be so in a degree to *all;* and may teach us to lift up our hearts to God in prayer, *that all Christian parents*, especially pious *mothers* and more particularly those whose character in life is so eminently *distinguished*, may enjoy this happiness, and see the *seed* they are

with

with such commendable industry *sowing* in the minds of their tender offspring, *growing up*, and bringing forth much *fruit*. SECT. I.

We have, in the beloved *apostle*, an excellent pattern of a becoming care, to make a *correspondence* with our Christian friends *useful:* which we shall do, if like him, we are exhorting them to the cultivation of *mutual love*, and to a constant uniform care *in keeping the commandments of God;* if we continue *warning* them against *the prevailing* sins and errors of the day, and urging them to a holy solicitude, that they may *not lose what they have already attained; but may receive full reward* for every work of faith, and labour of love, in consequence of a course of resolute and persevering piety. Ver. 5, 6, 8

Persons of the most distinguished goodness have need to be cautioned against that *excess* of generosity and hospitality, which might sometimes make them *partakers with seducers in their evil deeds*, by giving them their audience, *and wishing them good success*, while by their *fair speeches*, they impose upon the simplicity of open and upright hearts, who, because themselves are void of *fraud*, are often void of *suspicion too*. But there is a *prudent* caution to be observed upon this head; and it is the part of *faithful* friendship to suggest it; *for many deceivers are come out into the world*. For our security against them, let us be always upon our guard, and take care *to continue in the doctrine of Christ:* that so we *may have the Father, and the Son;* and if we are interested *in their* favour, we shall stand in *need* of nothing, and shall have nothing of which to be *afraid*. *Amen*. 10, 11, 7, 9

THE END OE THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE THIRD EPISTLE

OF

St. JOHN.

SECT. I.

The Apostle John, in this short epistle to Gaius, expresses his concern for his prosperity, and his joy in the honourable character he maintained for Christian candour, hospitality, and zeal; cautions him against the ambitious and turbulent practices of Diotrephes; and recommending Demetrius to his friendship, refers what he had further to say, to a personal interview. 3 John, *throughout.*

3 JOHN 1.

THE Elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

3 JOHN 1.

1 SECT. i.

THE elder addresses this epistle *to the beloved* and hospitable *Gaius*[a], *whom I love in the truth*, and hold as dear in the bowels of Christ, from a regard to the advancement and honour of his gospel. 3 John 1.

2 Beloved, I wish above

Beloved, I pray, that in every respect[b], *thou* 2 *mayest*

a *Gaius.*] We read of one Gaius, of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. who hospitably received the *apostle Paul*, when he went out to preach the gospel *gratis*; and if this were, as he seems to have been, the same, he was St. Paul's convert: nor is St. John's calling him *his child* an argument to the contrary; since in the general he addresses *all* Christians in the same tender and affectionate stile, agreeably to the sweetness of his temper, and suitably to his advanced years. Compare Dr. *Whitby in loc.*

b *In every respect: περι παντων.*] Our English translation is, *above all things.* Mr. *Hallet* would render it, *above all persons*; as if he had said, you are the *person*, for whose temporal and spiritual advantage I am concerned more than any other. *Hallet's Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 61, 62. But the words may so justly bear the *translation* I have given them, by which all

SECT. i.

3 John 2.

mayest prosper; and particularly that thou mayest *be in health; as* I have reason to believe, that *thy soul prospereth*; for I doubt not but that religion flourishes in thy heart, and abundantly justifies my wishing thee as healthful and prosperous as thou art good. 3 *For I rejoiced greatly when the* Christian *brethren came* from that part of the world in your neighbourhood, *and testified concerning thy truth*[c], *as thou walkest in the truth*, and adornest the gospel by an exemplary behaviour. 4 For indeed *I have no greater joy, than this* thing gives me, *that I may hear*[d] my Christian friends, whether converted by me, or others, whom I look upon as *my* dear *children, are walking in the truth*, and according to those directions which our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, has given us. 5 And, *beloved*, I must declare my entire approbation of thy conduct, and can openly bear my testimony to it, that *thou dost faithfully, whatsoever thou performest towards the brethren, and towards strangers*; thy behaviour to thy fellow-Christians known to thee, and to those with whom thou hast little acquaintance, yea, to all who have occasion to cast themselves upon thy hospitality, is much to the credit of the gospel, and I doubt not but it proceeds from a principle of true faith, and overflowing love to our common Redeemer. 6 And indeed many of the Christian strangers, *who* have been thus generously entertained by thee, *have testified* very honourably *concerning thy love before the church, whom thou dost well in bringing forward in their journey*[e], *in a manner worthy of God*, proceeding from a principle of

above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers.

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well:

all manner of difficulty is removed, that I think it much preferable to either of the former. And it hath the sanction of so good an authority as Erasmus Schmidius, who translates it *de omnibus*.

c *Testified concerning thy truth; συ τη αληθεια.*] Some have supposed the *apostle* here means, that they bore witness to *Gaius' sincerity*, and that this is the idea we should affix to αληθεια in this place, in order to avoid that tautology which there would be in the next clause, if we understood him here to speak of his *faith in the gospel*. But though it is allowed that αληθεια may signify *sincerity*, yet if we suppose that to be the case here, it will be necessary to understand it in two different senses in the same sentence; and I think the latter clause, *walking in the truth*, may have a further idea than merely his *faith*, which I have expressed in the *paraphrase*.

d *That I may hear.*] Dr. Whitby takes notice of it here, as an observation which many have made, that the use of the particle ινα for οτι and οταν is a peculiarity in St. John's stile.

e *Bringing them forward in their journey.*] This may possibly be understood in a *spiritual sense*, of assisting them in their travels through this wilderness to the heavenly world. Or it may have a literal signification, and then *one kind* of hospitality and charity is put for the *rest*. But I rather prefer the former sense.

f *They*

of Divine love, and correspondent to the relation in which you and they stand to him. SECT. i.

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth taking nothing of the Gentiles.

And whatever thou dost for them, our great Lord will take as done to himself; *for* it was *on his account*, and out of zeal for his honour and interest, that *they went out*, abandoned their habitations, possessions, and callings, that they might spread his gospel; *receiving nothing of the Gentiles*[f], among whom they laboured; that they might take off all suspicion of those mercenary views, above which divine grace had so far raised them. 3 John 7. 7

8 We therefore ought to receive such that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

We ought therefore, all of us, who have any habitation of our own, hospitably and respectfully *to receive such; that*, if Divine Providence do not give us an opportunity of laying ourselves out, as they do, in the ministerial office, *we may become*, as it were, *fellow-labourers* with them *in* the service of *the truth*, and through Divine grace, may be entitled to a part in their reward. 8

9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

I have lately *written to the church*, about which I know you are so much concerned; *but* I sometimes fear, lest it should not be with so good success as I could wish; for *Diotrephes*[g], *who affects the pre-eminence among them*, even above the apostles of Christ themselves, *hath not received us* with becoming regard; and his interest with some of the members is much greater than it ought to be. 9

10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us

Therefore if I come, as I hope I quickly shall, *I will be mindful of the works which he does;* many of which are very irregular, while he is continually *prating*[h] *against us with* idle, petulant, and *malicious words; and* 10

[f] *They went out, receiving nothing of the Gentiles:* Εξηλθον, μηδεν λαμβανοντες απο των εθνων.] Beza refers απο των εθνων to εξηλθον, and understands it, that the persons here spoken of, *went out from their respective countries and native places*, (απο των εθνων,) *leaving all their worldly possessions*, (μηδεν λαμβανοντες,) *to go and preach the gospel.* And in support of this construction, he observes, that παρα should have been used after λαμβανοντες, and not απο. But Mat. xvii. 25, 26, and 1 John ii. 27, are evident confutations of this remark. And whereas he thinks it absurd to imagine, the *unbelieving Gentiles* would contribute to the support of the *preachers of the gospel*, it is an obvious reply, that των εθνων may mean the *believing Gentiles*, as it is certain the word frequently does. *Wolfius*, who agrees with Beza, in referring απο των εθνων to εξηλθον, understands it of their being *driven* and *forced out* by the Gentiles, having been *stript of their possessions*; which would render them the more proper objects of *kindness* and *hospitality*. But there is nothing of this in the idea suggested by the word εξηλθον, and the more common signification of it is to *go out voluntarily*. See *Wolfii Curæ Philolog.* Vol. V. p. 334.

[g] *Diotrephes.*] It is uncertain who he was. Grotius thinks he was a Gentile convert, who would not admit the Jews; but it seems rather more probable that he was a Jew, who opposed the admission of the Gentiles, and set himself up as the *head of a party*, in opposition to the *apostles*.

[h] *Prating:* φλυαρων.] Compare 1 Tim. v. 13, *note* l.

SECT. i.

and not content with this, goes yet further in his opposition; for *he receives not the brethren himself*, though he knows they come from us, *and hinders those who would* receive them, from doing it; *and casts* [*them*] *out of the church*, forbidding them either to officiate, or communicate where his influence extends; than which nothing can be more tyrannical or intolerable.

3 John 10.

us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

11 As for thee, my *beloved* brother, *imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good;* behold such a conduct as his with a just abhorrence; and act according to that model of humility and condescension which you have seen in others, who may justly claim an authority much superior to his. *He that doeth good is of God:* he knows him, and he imitates his most amiable and spotless pattern: *but he that does evil*, that harbours such malignant passions, and behaves in so injurious a manner, whatever high notions he may pretend to, *has not seen God*, but is plainly ignorant of his perfections and of his will.

11 Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good, is of God: but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God.

12 *Demetrius*, on the contrary, is a most excellent person, who *has a good testimony from all men, and* even *from the truth itself; and we* have *also*, upon all occasions, borne and *do bear* [*the same*] *testimony; and ye know that this our testimony is true.*

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record, and ye know that our record is true.

13 *I have many* other *things* which I should be glad *to write* to you; *but I will not write* them *to you by ink and pen*, as it would take up too much time, and I should not be able, after all,

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

14 fully to express myself. *But I hope quickly to see thee*, and *to speak face to face*, with all the freedom we could desire; till that time therefore, I refer what I might now further say; and only add, *Peace* [*be*] *to thee*, and every desirable blessing from God our Father, and Christ Jesus

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face.

15 our Lord. *The* Christian *friends*, who are here with me, *salute thee;* and I desire, that thou wouldst *salute the friends* that are with thee *by name*, and assure them of my most cordial and entire respect.

15 Peace *be* to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 How happy was *Gaius* in the friendship of that *apostle*, whom *Jesus* had honoured with such a distinguishing degree of *his* friendship.

ship. How much happier still was he, in a *soul* so thriving and *prosperous*, that even such a friend, who could not but hold flattery in detestation, should be able to make the good state of his soul, a *standard* by which to adjust his wishes in relation to his *temporal* affairs. O what a *curse* would this be upon many, that they might *prosper even as their souls prospered!* And yet what is *all other* prosperity without this, but like that of *fools, which destroys them*, (Prov. i. 32.) How agreeable is it to a true *Christian*, to hear well of the behaviour of those who are dear to him in the bonds of peculiar friendship; to hear of their *walking in the truth;* and especially when these are *our own children*, or those whom God has made us the means of *converting*, or those whom we have been concerned in *training up* for him. O that those especially, to whom the education of *many* has been committed, may have this great happiness. "Visit each of our children, and young friends, *O Lord*, with thy mercy; animate them to *walk in thy truth;* and entail thy blessing upon them, when nothing remains, of all the offices of love we have bestowed, but the *memory* of our exhortations and examples."

SECT. i.

Ver. 2

3, 4

May sentiments of true *generosity* fill and expand our hearts more and more. May we act toward strangers, and especially our brethren, in all the instances in which they need our assistance, in a manner *worthy of God*, worthy of the relation in which we and they, have the honour to stand to our *heavenly Father;* and especially, let our love abound to those who have a desire to *spread the gospel.* And O, that it were more universal! O, that Divine grace would excite more to quit the indulgence of their *homes*, or their *countries*, if there be no bond of duty to detain them there, that they may go and *preach to the Gentiles!* And though there be no prospect of any requital from *them*, God will open to them the inexhaustible stores of his celestial treasure, *and they shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.* Let them but see to it, that their intentions are *pure*, that they do it *for his sake: and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

5

6

7

But alas! how much more *common* even to this day, and that among the ministers of the gospel, is the character of *Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence!* How has the spirit of *opposition* and *ambition* prevailed in the *church*, as well as in the *world!* How does it *still* prevail! and in this view, how many *malicious words* have been uttered against those who have with the greatest simplicity desired to *follow the apostles!* With what contempt have they often been *cast out of the church!* Yea, in a thousand instances, with what savage cruelty hunted *out of the world! How long, O Lord, holy and true!* Let us not however be impatient, but glorify God, in the most humble or painful station he

9

10

1

SECT. i. shall allot, by doing, or suffering all his will: still *imitating that which is good*, as becomes those *who are of God*, who hope to see him, and enjoy him for ever.

Ver. 12 Let us endeavour, like *Demetrius*, to secure to ourselves *a good report of all men;* but especially, let us see to it that we reverence *our own consciences*, and that we secure *their testimony*, which will be agreeable to that of *the truth* itself. So will our honour, and our happiness be secured; and if any *vapour* should now rise to obscure it, the day is near, when *the Sun of righteousness* shall undoubtedly chase it away.

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF

ST. JUDE.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

JUDE, or Judas, the author of this epistle, is often mentioned as one of the *apostles* of our Lord, and the brother of James the Less. The *canonical* authority of this epistle hath been disputed; but it is not the business of these commentaries to enter largely into such questions. Probably its authenticity would never have been doubted, had it not been for an imagination, ill-grounded indeed, that the author had quoted a *spurious* book, called the *prophecy of Enoch.* The reader may consult what learned men have written upon this argument, particularly Dr. *Lardner*, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History;* Dr. Whitby and Dr. *Twells*, in the second part of his *critical examination of the new text and version of the New Testament.* The latter hath collected the principal materials with accuracy, and set them in a clear and convincing light.

There is a remarkable similarity between *this epistle* and part of the *second epistle of St. Peter*, which, as we observed in the *Introduction* to that epistle, was probably owing to this, that both the *apostles* drew their character of the false teachers, against whom they cautioned their readers, from the character given of the false prophets in some ancient *Jewish author;* and it is very possible too, (as Bishop Sherlock observes,) that St. Jude might have the *second epistle of St. Peter* before him.

Dr. Mill fixes the *date* of this epistle about the year 90, (see his *Prolegomena*, p. 17, sect 145, edit. *Kuster*,) and his principal argument is, that the false teachers, which St. Peter describes as *yet to come*, St. Jude mentions as *already come* But, on a comparison, there does not appear that *remarkable difference* in their phraseology, which will be sufficient to prove that St. Jude wrote his epistle *so long* after St. Peter's second epistle as is here supposed, though I acknowledge, it will prove that it was written *after* it.

The

The *design* of the apostle is plainly, "by describing the character of the false teachers, and pointing out the Divine judgments which persons of such a character had reason to expect, to caution Christians against listening to their suggestions, and being thereby perverted from the faith and purity of the gospel."

For the *analysis* of the epistle, I refer my reader to the *contents* prefixed to the *two sections*, into which I have divided it.

A PARA-

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE

OF

St. JUDE.

SECT. I.

The Apostle Jude after a general salutation, exhorts the Christians to whom he wrote, strenuously to assert the purity of their common faith; reminding them of the destruction which came on God's professing people, yea, on the apostate angels for their sins; as well as on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; and then he begins the description of some seditious and abandoned persons, from whom he imagined them in peculiar danger. Jude, ver. 1—11.

JUDE 1.

JUDE the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and* called:

JUDE 1.

SECT. I.

Jude 1.

YOU receive this epistle from *Jude*, who like his brethren the other apostles, cannot but rejoice and glory in the title of *a servant of Jesus Christ, and* who is the *brother of James*, so well known by his distinguished services and sufferings in the cause of our Divine Master; and he inscribes it *to those who are sanctified in God the Father*, devoted to his service through the influence of his grace; who are also the *called and preserved in Jesus Christ*, brought into the fellowship of his religion, and guarded by his grace, in the midst of a thousand snares,

SECT. i.

Jude 2.

which might have tempted them to have made shipwreck of their faith. *May mercy, and peace and love*, from our heavenly Father, and our compassionate Saviour, *be multiplied to you:* and may you increase in all the happy fruits of Divine favour and mercy; and especially, in that spirit of candour and charity which is to be numbered among the most precious of them. My *beloved, giving all diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation*[a], to the hope of which we are brought by the profession of the gospel, *I judged it necessary to* direct my pen, particularly with respect to those unhappy attempts that have been made, to adulterate Christianity, by some who continue to profess a regard to it. I now therefore *write to you, exhorting* and beseeching [*you*] *to strive earnestly for the faith* which was *once* for all *delivered to the saints*, for the instruction of every future age; and not to suffer any by violence or by fraud to rob you of so inestimable a treasure. *For some* crafty and pernicious *men have*, as it were, with a serpentine art *glided in* among us, *who were of old*, as it were, described and *registered to this condemnation*[b], by God's righteous sentence denounced against crimes like theirs, long before they appeared in the world, *Impious* and ungrateful *men, who*, presume to *turn* even *the grace of our God* itself, which ought to be an everlasting

2 Mercy unto you, and peace and love, be multiplied.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God

a *Giving all diligence to write to you concerning the common salvation, &c.*] Some have supposed the meaning is, That whereas he intended to write them a *practical* letter, he was compelled to go into some *controversial* subjects. I rather think he intends to declare by this expression, that the exhortation he now gives them, *to contend earnestly for the faith*, was indeed subservient to promote that common salvation he designed to lead them to the pursuit of. Bishop Sherlock thinks *the faith delivered to the saints*, is the same with the *holy commandment delivered*, 2 Pet. ii. 21, that is, with the directions and instructions which *the council of the apostles* had sent them, with regard to these pestilent teachers. *Sherlock on Proph.* p. 200. 5th Edit.

b *Who were registered to this condemnation.*] The word προγεγραμμενοι may well signify *described and put upon record*; that is, whose character and condemnation may be considered as described in the punishment of other notorious sinners who who were a kind of representatives of them. Which interpretation I prefer to any other, as it tends to clear God of that heavy imputation which it must bring upon his *moral attributes*, to suppose that he *appoints* men to *sin* against him, and then *condemns* them for doing what they could not but do, and what they were, independent on their own freedom of choice, fated to. A doctrine so pregnant with *gloomy*, and as I should fear, with *fatal* consequences, that I think it a part of the duty I owe to the *word of God*, to rescue it from the imputation of containing such a tenet. Bishop Sherlock thinks, the word refers to the description given of such kind of persons by an ancient *writer of the Jewish nation*, cited as he supposes in this epistle, and in the second chapter of the second epistle of Peter. *Sherl. on Proph.* p. 181. 5th. Edit. Compare ver. 14, 5, 7, 8.

c *God*

God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

everlasing source of love, and engagement to sanctity and obedience, *into* an occasion of *lasciviousness*; as if they thought they might with impunity go on to sin, that grace might abound; *and denying God the only* original *Sovereign* [c] *and our Lord Jesus Christ*, whom he has invested with universal dominion, to be acknowledged by all who would not be found rebels against himself! *But I would remind you, as you* 5 *once knew this*, that having been taught it, you may never forget it, even *that the Lord, having saved the people* of Israel from *out of the land of Egypt*, and rescued them by so glorious an interposition of his almighty power, *afterward destroyed those that did not believe*, though they had once experienced so wonderful a deliverance. And thus should we have reason to fear, that notwithstanding our Christian profession, he would destroy us, if we adulterate and pervert his religion, after a manner contrary to its original design. *The angels also who kept not* 6 *their first state* [d], *but* suffering their minds to be transported with ambitious and irregular passions, were discontented in that high rank of being which Providence assigned them, and *left their proper abode* in the region of glory, instead of permitting them to advance themselves by their rebellion, *he has* by his righteous vengeance precipitated into the pit of destruction, and *reserved in perpetual bonds, under darkness*, in the infernal prison, *to* be brought forth at *the judgment of the great day*, and then to receive their final sentence. And earth has produced 7 many awful scenes, in which the Divine vengeance has had its triumph over sinful mortals; *as* particularly *Sodom and Gomorrah* [e], *and the cities*

SECT. i.

Jude 4.

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves

c *God the Sovereign, and our Lord, &c.*] Some would render it, *our only Master, God and Lord.* See *Dr. Watts on the Trin.* p. 113. But it seems most agreeable to the general doctrine and phraseology of scripture, to retain our translation, Compare John xvii. 3.

d *Their first state: την αρχην εαυτων.*] Some translate these words, *the government of themselves.* But Dr. Scott interprets it of that *place* in heaven which was assigned them, and which they were not content with; and their *leaving this first habitation* he takes to have been a voluntary thing, and that they chose to come down to the neighbourhood of this earth, that they might seduce mankind to join with them in their revolt. But this does not seem to suit the phrase of their being *cast out*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Mr. Boyse would translate it, *their own head*, that is, *Christ. Boyse's Serm.* Vol. III. p. 406. Compare Hos. i. 11, in the *Seventy.*

e *Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner with them: τον ομοιον πεπλοις τροπον.*] Some have pleaded, that this seems to imply, that the sin of the *angels was fornication*; and consequently, that this *epistle* is not *authentic.* But there seems no necessity for interpreting the

SECT. i.

cities about them, in like manner with them committing fornication, and by yet grosser and more unnatural licentiousness, *going after strange* and detestable gratifications of their pampered and indulged *flesh, are set forth for an example* to other presumptuous sinners; *suffering* that, which really appears a most lively emblem of *the vengeance of eternal fire* [f], having their lovely and fruitful country turned into a kind of hell upon earth. *So these dreamers also* [g], in their luxurious indulgencies, suffer their thoughts to be amused with vain and polluted imaginations, whereby they *defile the flesh*, which ought to be sacred, together with the spirit, to the service of God. *They make light of dominion*, and authority derived from the Supreme Sovereign, *and speak evil of dignities*, of persons in the most honourable stations: *Whereas* we have heard in tradition, that *Michael the archangel, when contending in dispute with the devil, concerning the body of Moses* [h], which the angel was to bury privately, and he would have revealed, *did not presume to bring against him a railing accusation* [i] *but*

Jude 7.

themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

the expression with such extreme rigour, as if it must mean that their sin was of *the same kind*; it is sufficient that the *comparison* holds in this, that they were both guilty of very *great wickedness*.—There are some who refer τον ομοιον τοπον, *in like manner with them*, to the *cities about them*, who sinned in the same manner with Sodom and Gomorrah; nor is it any objection to this, as some have supposed it is, that τοις cannot agree with Σοδομα και Γομορρα; for in reality, these nouns are of the *neuter* gender, see Luke xvii. 29: Mark vi. 11; Gen xiii. 10,) in the *Seventy*. And if they were not, nothing is more common than an *enallage* of gender, in such a case as this, where τοις must refer to the *men* who inhabited these cities.

f *Vengeance of eternal life.*] Dr. Whitby has brought many arguments to prove, that the vengeance here spoken of must be the *loss of their cities*, rather than their *souls* and produces instances to show, that αιωνιος is used in a sense consistent with this interpretation.

g *Dreamers:* ενυπνιαζομενοι.] Our translators render this, *filthy dreamers*. The context shews they deserve the *epithet*; but as the Greek does not express it, I judged it most faithful to the *original* to omit it.

h *Body of Moses.*] Archbishop Tillotson, see his Works, Vol. II. p. 158,) and many other good writers, think this illustrated by Deut. xxxiv. 6. He supposes, that had the devil been able to discover to the Jews the place where Moses was interred, they would afterwards have paid an *idolatrous* honour to his remains; and it would have gratified his malice exceedingly, to have made *him* an occasion of idolatry after his death, who had been so great an *enemy* to it in his life. To prevent this, he thinks that Michael buried the body secretly. This proves by the way, that *good angels* are sometimes concerned in limiting the power of *devils*, which must no doubt be a great vexation to those malignant spirits. But Mr. Baxter, suggests it as a doubt, whether it were about the *dead* body of Moses, or Moses exposed on the *water*, that there was this contention. *Baxter's Works*, Vol. II. p. 341.

i *A railing accusation.*] Archbishop Tillotson suggests, that the *archangel* was afraid the devil would have been too hard for him at *railing*. The words seem to me to intimate, that the *angel* thought it a part of the reverence due to God, not to mention his name and judgment, in a *furious passionate* manner, but mildly and gently. *Witsius* thinks the *devil* blasphemed, and that the *angel* did not accuse him but referred the matter to the judgment of the great day. *Witsii. Miscel.* Vol. II. IV. 6, § 28. See also the *Commentary* of this learned

SECT. i.

but had so much reverence for the Divine presence, as to speak with moderation and gentleness, even to that great enemy of God and men; and *said, the Lord rebuke thee* [k] for this outrage, and teach thee to restrain such shocking expressions. (Compare Zech. iii. 2.) *But these* daring and impious men *blaspheme what indeed they know not; and what they naturally, as the irrational animals, know* [l], the things which tend to the gratification of their inferior part, the low circle to which their knowledge and care is confined, *in these they are corrupted*, by the gross and scandalous abuse of them, to the dishonour of God, and to their own infamy and destruction. *Woe* be *unto them*, and woe will attend them; *for they have gone in the way of Cain*, that persecutor and murderer, while like him, they have despised the appointed method of God's mercy; *and they have run on* with prodigious eagerness *in the description of Balaam's reward*; enslaved like him, to mean secular views, they have abandoned themselves to sin *and* ruin, till at length they *have perished* [m] *in the contradiction of Korah*; like him they have opposed God's appointed messengers, and his Son, to whom he has devolved the conduct of his church; and methinks, like him and his company, I see them already struck by the lightning of God's wrath, and overwhelmed with remediless destruction.

Jude 9.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

10

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

11

IMPROVE-

learned author *in loc.* whose remarks on *all the verses* are framed with great erudition and accuracy. Perhaps ουκ ἐτολμησε κρισιν επενεγκειν βλασφημιας may signify, that he did not pass *judgment upon his blasphemy*, but referred him to God.

k *The Lord rebuke thee.*] It is highly probable the *apostle* refers to some *ancient book*, in which this fact was thus mentioned, and speaks upon the supposition of its truth, which the persons he reasoned against, did not dispute. And the argument does not lie in any regard shewn to the devil as a *dignitary*, and one who exercises dominion over subordinate evil spirits; for to be a leader of a band of such inexcusable rebels could entitle him to no respect; but it seems to arise from the detestable character of the devil; as if he had said, If the *angel* did not rail even against the *devil*, how much less ought we against *men in authority*, even supposing them in some things to behave amiss: To do it therefore when they behave *well* must be a wickedness yet much more aggravated.

l *Naturally know.*] Compare the *notes* on the parallel texts in 2 Pet. ii. for the illustration of this and other passages which occur here.

m *Have perished.*] This is a genuine trace of a *prophetic* spirit, which speaks of things certainly *future*, as if they were *past*. And as such I thought proper to illustrate it in the *paraphrase*.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. i.

How happy are the people of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who in him are *called, sanctified, and kept* by the Divine omnipotence, *through faith unto salvation!* For *mercy and peace shall be multi-*
Ver. 12 *plied* upon them, till *mercy* hath, as it were, finished his commission, and conducted them to *eternal peace.* We learn from this example of the *apostle* before us, of how great necessity it is, in some circumstances, if *ministers* would promote the *common*
3 *salvation* of their hearers, to guard them against the *prevailing* errors of the *day*, and to excite them *earnestly to strive for the faith once delivered to the saints*, as for a prize of the highest importance. May we rightly discern its nature, and be very careful, that while we are attempting to exert a *Christian* zeal, we do not mingle with it our own mistakes, and our own irregular passions, in such a manner as to *tear in pieces* what we are so eager to *preserve.* In short, let us learn from *scripture*, what that *faith* is, and what the importance of its respective *articles* are; and let us always be endeavouring to maintain it in the *spirit of love.*

May all who would disturb the *church* by pernicious doctrines,
4 or scandalous practices; and especially, they who would ungratefully *turn the grace of God into lasciviousness*, and thereby *deny the only true God*, and *our Saviour*, reflect upon the awful judgment of God on the rebel-*angels*, and on sinful men, not on the
5, 7, *cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* only, but even on his own *people*,
5 whom *he had delivered from Egypt*, when they proved obstinate and *unbelieving;* and as we dread an exclusion from the heavenly *Canaan;* yea, as we dread the *chains of darkness*, and the *vengeance of eternal fire;* let us avoid and abhor the character described in
8, &c. the *following verses:* the *dream* of lewdness, the *brutal* indulgence of sensuality, the *contradiction of Korah*, the *covetousness of Ba-*
11 *laam*, and the *malignity of Cain.* God has *written down* their *condemnation* and destruction in the eternal records of his word; that they might be for a *sign*, and that others may *hear and fear,*
4 and take heed that *they do not so wickedly.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

The Apostle pursues the character of the scandalous professors he had mentioned before; and concludes with exhorting the Christians to whom he wrote, to endeavour to secure their own edification in faith and love, and to do their utmost for the preservation and recovery of others. Jude, ver. 12, *to the end.*

JUDE 12.

THESE are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds: trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

JUDE 12.

SECT. ii.

Jude 12.

I MUST further proceed to caution you, my brethren, against those wicked and seducing men, who are so desirous of insinuating themselves into the Christian church, and whose attempts to corrupt it are so unwearied, and in many instances, so fatal. *These are spots in your love-feasts*[a], which tend to expose them to the reproach of the adversary; [*who*] *when they banquet with you, feed themselves without fear*, and will run into excesses, which if they be not resolutely suppressed, will be imputed to the whole body. They make indeed a great profession of their designs of usefulness in the church, but they are *clouds without water*, from which no refreshment or fruitfulness is to be expected; *borne about by the winds* of temptation, hither and thither, without any command of themselves; and if when they first took upon them the Christian profession, they gave some better hopes, as many of them perhaps did, they are like *trees, whose early buddings are withered*[b], and so now remain *without fruit*; yea, not only so, but are *twice dead*[c]: successive summers and winters have passed over them, and they have been continually growing more fit for fuel, and so are now good for nothing but *to be utterly rooted up*, to be taken away from the plantation, which they only cumber, dishonour, and deform

a *Love-feasts.*] So I chose to render αγαπαις, as it is well known the *primitive Christians* had such feasts, though it seems that from the *abuse* of them by persons of a character like those here described, they were soon laid aside. See Mr. *Hallet* on the subject, *Notes and Disc.* Vol. III. *Disc.* 6. Dr. Lightfoot, and Dr. Whitby, who follows him, are not for referring the αγαπαι here mentioned to the Christian's *feasts of charity*; in opposition to whom, the learned reader may consult *Witsius' Commentary* on the place.

b *Whose early buddings are withered.*] We render this, *whose fruit withereth*; but it seems to me, that φθινοπωρινα is much more exactly rendered, as in *this* version, and the appearance of a *tautology* avoided.

c *Twice dead.*] Some explain this of *natural corruption* and *apostacy*; but the gloss in the *paraphrase* seems much more easy and genuine. There is an admirable strength and spirit in the description given in the following verses.

d *Wan-*

SECT. ii.

deform, and cast into the fire. Their passions are violent and impetuous, like so many *fierce*
Jude 13. *waves of the sea*, furiously *foaming out* the irregular tumults of their hearts; and in them, *their own shame: wandering stars*[d], which though for a while they may glitter, will soon have ended their course, will be found, notwithstanding all their blaze, destitute of any real and permanent light of their own, and in the number of those *to whom blackness of darkness is reserved for ever*, and will soon be driven to an eternal distance from the great Original of light and happiness, to which they shall never re-
14 turn. *And* indeed, when I consider their characters and their actions, I may say, that according to the ancient tradition, *Enoch, also the seventh* in lineal descent *from Adam, prophesied*[e] *against them*[f], and described their crimes and their condemnation, *when he said, Behold, the Lord comes with myriads of his holy ones*, attended with legions of angels in his descent for this
15 important purpose: For he comes *to execute judgment upon all* according to their respective works; *and* by witnesses that cannot be confronted, particularly *to convict all the ungodly among them, of all their impious works which they have impiously committed; and* he will then be mindful, not only of their cruel and oppressive acts, but *of all the hard* and irreligious *things which impious sinners have spoken against him* and his people: and certain it is, that these words are as suitable to their case as if it had been particularly

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

d *Wandering stars.*] The Jews are said to have called their teachers *stars*; and they are represented under that emblem, Rev. i. 16; ii. 1. And as the *planets* seem to have a very *irregular* motion, being sometimes *stationary*, and sometimes *retrograde*, they are proper emblems of persons so *unsettled* in their principles, and so *irregular* in their behaviour, as these men were.

e *Enoch prophesied.*] A precious fragment of *antediluvian history* is here preserved to us, as it seems by the special providence of God, who taught the apostle Jude to distinguish between what was genuine and spurious in the tradition. It can by no means be proved, that this is a *quotation* from that foolish book, called *Enoch's prophecy*, as Bishop *Sherlock* has very rightly urged; nor would it prove the *inspiration* of the book from whence it was taken but only the truth of this *particular* passage. *Sherlock on Proph.* p. 188, 189, 5th *Edit.* Compare 2 Tim. iii. 8, and the *note* there.

f *Prophesied against them.*] Mr. *Blackwall*, (*Sacr. Class.* Vol. I. p. 164,) has shewn by adequate authorities, that προεφήτευσε τούτοις may be rendered, *prophesied against these.* Perhaps this may explain what was said before, of their being *registered to this condemnation*, ver. 4. Some have thought the *coming of the Lord* here mentioned, was his coming attended with *angels*, to bring on the *deluge*. If it refers to his coming to the *universal judgment*, it is a most remarkable testimony to a *future state*, not indeed in the Mosaic economy, but previous to it. And perhaps Moses omitting this, (as I think it almost certain he knew it,) is to be resolved into the *restriction* under which he wrote, agreeable to the principles which the learned Dr. *Warburton* has so largely stated in his *Divine Legation*, &c.

g *Ex-*

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage.

cularly intended. *These are murmurers,* that can never be contented with the allotments of Providence, or with the conduct of any about them; *that find fault* continually *with their lot, walking according to their own* unbridled *lusts; and their mouth speaks extravagant things*[g]; some, by way of exclamation against those they disapprove, and others in the height of encomiums and panegyrics, on those who are their favourites, and the leaders of their party; *having [such] persons in admiration,* not so much *for the sake of* their real excellencies, as of some present *gain* which they meanly propose to themselves as the reward of their servile flattery. SECT. ii. Jude 16.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But you, my *beloved,* instead of following these wandering guides, *remember the words which were formerly spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ*[h], who have preached his gospel to you in all its purity and energy. 17

18 *How* that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

For they have told you, that in the last time profane *mockers shall come, walking according to their own ungodly* and wanton *lusts*[i], and making a jest of those who do not run with them to the same excesses of riot. 18

19 These be they who separate themselves, having not the Spirit.

These are they, who, in many places *separate themselves* from the church, as of a purer stamp, and more refined attainments than others; *sensual,* and entirely addicted to the low gratification of their animal life; by which they make it too apparent, *that* they *have not the Spirit,* whatever high pretences they may make to its extraordinary communications. 19

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith,

But I have the pleasing persuasion, that *you,* my *beloved* brethren, will not only guard against being seduced by them, but, according to the exhortations so often given you, will still be *edifying yourselves* and one another, *in your most holy faith;* that understanding 20

g *Extravagant things.*] So I think ὑπέρογκα may very probably be rendered; and if we may judge of extravagant things, *by those* which Irenæus in particular has recorded in his account of some *early heretics,* the expression was applied with the utmost propriety. See the same phrase Dan. xi. 36. in the *Seventy. Witsius in loc.*

h *Apostles of our Lord,* &c.] The resemblance between this text and 2 Pet. iii. 2. is very remarkable. Bishop Sherlock observes it to be such as would incline one to think, that St. Jude had the text in Peter before him, and omitted what hath a peculiar reference to the former part of St. Peter's epistle, and to which there was nothing in his own to answer. See *his Discourses on Proph.* p. 193. 5th Edit.

i *Ungodly lusts.*] For ασεβειων, *ungodly,* some would read ασελγειων, *lascivious* or wanton. See *Phil. Lips. against Collins,* p. 73. But as this *reading* is not absolutely necessary to the sense, I cannot persuade myself to alter the word merely on *conjecture.*

k *Garment*

SECT. ii.

ing its articles more clearly, and feeling their happy efficacy to promote the work of holiness in your souls, you may be more and more established against the attacks of these deceivers: especially, *praying in the Holy Spirit*, and under his influence, vouchsafed in answer to your prayers, making swifter advances in the Divine life. And be careful thus to *keep yourselves in* the exercise of that sacred affection, *the love of God*, which ought always to rule in your hearts: *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life*, to which this compassionate Saviour will assuredly conduct all those who confide in him.

faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.

Jude 20.

21

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

And while you are yourselves animated with this chearful hope, do your utmost for the preservation of others; and in this respect, *on some have* tender *compassion*, and apply to them with the softest and most endearing offices of Christian friendship; *making a* great *difference* between them, and the case of others, who have drank deeper of the poison, and are become active in the mischief. It may seem to have an unkind appearance, *but* it is most certain, there are *some*, whom if you would *save* at all, you must attempt it *with fear* and trembling, by severe methods; as alarmed yourselves, and terrifying them, with the apprehensions of God's judgments; as if you were *snatching* [*them*] with eagerness *out of the fire*, into which they are fallen, or just ready to fall. And if you desire, that your efforts, in either of these cases, should be successful, you must take great care to preserve your own purity, *hating even the garment* that is *spotted with the flesh*[k], lest by the touch of it you yourselves be polluted. I am sensible, this will require strenuous vigilance and resolution; but I hope the grace of God will animate you to it. To this therefore *now* I solemnly commit you; *even to him who is able to keep you from falling:* rugged and dangerous as the ways of life are, *and* feeble as you know yourselves to be, he is able at length *to present* [*you*] *blameless*, and

22

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23

23 And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his

k *Garment spotted with the flesh.*] Mr. Cradock interprets this of the caution, with which a man would avoid a *garment*, which had been worn by one who had a *plague-sore;* but perhaps there may be a reference to such passages in the Mosaic law, as Lev. xv. 4, 10, 17. See Witsius on the place, who well defends this sense against Erasmus; whose opinion it was, that the *apostle* alludes to the *white garment*, which those who were *newly baptized*, put on in token of *innocence*.

his glory with exceeding joy,

and in the full perfection of holiness, *before the presence of his glory*, in his final appearance; *with exceeding* great and unutterable *joy.* SECT. ii. Jude 24.

25 To the only wise God our Saviour *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

To him, as *the only wise God*, who is now become *our Saviour*, our Guardian, our Friend, and our Father, [*be*] *glory and majesty, dominion and power*, ascribed; and obedience, reverence, and love rendered, through Christ Jesus, *both now and through all ages*, world without end. *Amen.* 25

IMPROVEMENT.

Let those, who have the honour of being numbered among the disciples of *Christ*, stand at the remotest distance from the *evil* with which these unhappy creatures are branded by the *apostle* in this *epistle*. And may Divine grace preserve all his churches from such *spots in their feasts of charity!* May our *horizon* be secured from those dark and gloomy *clouds without water;* the plantations of God among us be free from the incumbrance and disgrace of those *withered and fruitless trees, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots!* How illustrious was the *prophecy*, with which *Enoch, the seventh from Adam*, was inspired; and how precious is that fragment of *antediluvian* history, which is here preserved, and which shall surely be accomplished in its season! The day is now much nearer, when *the Lord will come with ten thousands of his saints:* may the *ungodly* remember it, and suppress in time the *speeches* which will then assuredly be reproved, and repent of the *deeds*, which if unrepented of, however forgotten now, will be brought into open view, and draw down upon their heads the destruction which at present seems to linger. That we may have *confidence* before him at his coming, let us *remember the words of the apostle*, and implore the influences of the Divine *Spirit*, which *sensualists, who walk after their own lusts*, quench and stifle, and which they mock and deride. Let us, however, be concerned to *edify* ourselves *in our most holy faith*, and to *pray in the Holy Ghost*, under his influence, direction, and assistance. The security of the heart amidst so many temptations, and its richest cordial in all its afflictions, is *the love of God;* but how soon does the celestial flame languish and die, if it be not constantly fed with new fuel! Let it then be our care in humble dependence upon Divine grace, to *keep ourselves in the love of God:* which will be cherished in proportion to that degree of faith and hope, with which we *look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus* Ver. 12, 13 14 15 17 18, 19 20 21

SECT. ii.

Christ unto eternal life: for what can so powerfully excite our love to God as such a consideration?

Ver. 22 If we do expect it, let us express our regard to the *salvation of others*, as well as to our own; and apply ourselves to those who seem to be in danger, with such *different* addresses of *awe* or *tenderness*, as their different circumstances and tempers may require.

23 But some way or another, let us exert ourselves to *pluck them out of the fire*, who are in danger of falling into it, and perishing for ever.

A care to preserve our own characters and conscience *unspotted*, will be necessary to our courage, and hope of success, in such

24 efforts as these. Let us therefore be more frequently looking up to him, who *is able to keep us from falling*, and to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be *presented blameless before the presence of his glory*. Then shall our hearts know a *joy* beyond what earth can afford, beyond what heaven itself shall have given us in the separate state; then shall God also *rejoice* over us, and the joy of our compassionate Saviour be completed, in the seeing the full accomplishment of the *travail of his soul*. To him who has so wisely formed the scheme,

25 and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, *be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.*

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR ON THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR:

OR,

A PARAPHRASE

ON

THE REVELATION OF

ST. JOHN.

WITH

CRITICAL NOTES, AND A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF EACH SECTION.

A

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON THE

REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THOUGH the authority of this book was called in question in the beginning of the *third century*, yet this is no reasonable objection against receiving it into the sacred canon; for perhaps no part of the New Testament, though of unquestionable authenticity and credit, was more universally acknowledged, or mentioned with higher respect, during the *two preceding centuries*. Dr. Mill observes, that in a few years after it was written, it was numbered among the *apostolical* writings, by the churches of Asia, the neighbouring churches of Syria and Samaria, the more distant ones of Africa, Egypt and Rome, and the other churches of Europe. Accordingly Mr. Lowman, citing this remark of Dr. Mill, makes the following additional observation, "that hardly any one book hath received more early, more authentic, or more satisfactory attestations.

Its *canonical authority* being debated so late as the *third century*, when it had been universally admitted before, appears to have arisen, from the opposition made to those absurd opinions, which it is well known were entertained by several *fathers* concerning the *millennium*. These being entirely grounded upon an injudicious and mistaken interpretation of some *prophecies*, contained in this sacred book. Caius, with some others, to end the controversy as speedily and effectually as possible, weakly and indiscreetly ventured to deny the *authority* of the book, which had given occasion to it. If the reader would see this argument handled at large, and the sentiments of the *ancients* represented fully and distinctly, he may consult Dr. *Mill's Prolegomena*, *Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Apocalypse*, Dr. *Twell's third part of his Critical examination of the new text and version*, and Dr. *Lardner's second part of the Credibility of the Gospel-History*, passim.

This

This *prophetic* book is entitled, *The Revelation of* Jesus Christ, *which he sent and signified by his angel to his servant* John. There is, in my opinion, very little reason to doubt, that the John here mentioned was the *evangelist* of that name, and the *author of the three epistles*. For concerning *this John* antiquity agrees, that he was banished to Patmos in the reign of Domitian, for his adherence to the Christian faith. And the author of this book informs the churches of Asia, (chap. i. ver. 9,) that *he, their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, received these revelations, when he was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God, and the testimony of* Jesus Christ. And if, with some learned men, we apprehend, that the tradition of the evangelist John being banished to the isle Patmos, was occasioned by this passage of the revelation, it shews at least, that it was the most *early*, as well as most generally received opinion of the *ancients*, that the *author of this book* was the same with St. *John the evangelist*. This book is commonly called, *The Revelation of* St. *John the Divine*. But this appellation of its author is not of *canonical authority;* it was first given to St. John by Eusebius, not to distinguish him from any other person of the same name, but on account of those mysterious and sublime points of divinity, with the knowledge of which he seems to have been favoured above his *fellow-apostles*.

If the account of Eusebius is to be credited, that St. John was banished into Patmos, and there received his revelation, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, we may fix the *date* of this book, with great probability, about the year 96. I am aware, that some authors of very distinguished character, and particularly the great Sir Isaac Newton, place it earlier, and even before the destruction of Jerusalem. The learned Wolfius, (in his *Prolegomena* to the revelation, in the *fifth volume* of his *Curæ Philologicæ,)* hath examined and refuted this opinion; I shall here only observe, that perhaps the *seven churches* of Asia were not founded so early as this opinion supposes, or at least they were not then become so considerable, much less had undergone such changes and revolutions, as the respective *epistles* to them recorded in this book represent them to have done.

At the close of the magnificent description of our blessed Lord's appearance to St. John, contained in the *first chapter*, he is ordered to *write the things which he saw*, (that is, the glorious vision he then beheld,) and *the things which are*, or the state of the churches at that time, and *the things which shall be hereafter*, or the future state and condition of the church, to the end of the world. Accordingly this book may properly be divided into *three parts*.

The *first* containing the *introduction*, or a preface and dedication to the seven churches in Asia, and an account of the glorious vision of our Lord, with which St. John was favoured during his banishment in Patmos, where he also received a Divine revelation, concerning the state of the church. (Chap. i. *throughout.)*

The *second part*, containing the *epistles* which Christ commanded

ed him to write to the seven churches of Asia, relating to their present circumstances, and to the duties resulting from them. (Chap. ii. and iii.)

The *third part*, which describes the condition of the church in after-times, from the *third chapter* to the end of the book, begins with a sublime description of the Deity enthroned in glory, surrounded with angels, and with the heavenly church; and then proceeds to represent a *sealed book*, or the volume of God's decrees, given to the *Lamb*, who only was worthy to open it, and who, on that account, receives the acclamation of the whole choir of saints and angels. (chap. iv. v.) After this sublime apparatus, the *Lamb* is represented as opening the *seals* of the book, one after another: and with this the scene of *prophecy* begins; which may very properly be divided, (as it is by the learned Mr. Lowman, who is undoubtedly the best commentator extant, on this part of the New Testament,) into *seven periods*.

The First Period is that of the *seals*.

The *first* seal represents a white horse, his rider having a bow in his hand, and a crown of gold on his head, going forth to conquer.

The *second* represents a red horse; and to his rider is given a great sword, and power to take peace from the earth.

The *third* represents a black horse, whose rider hath a pair of scales in his hand, to weigh corn and provision.

The *fourth* represents a pale horse, whose name is Death, to whom is given power to slay the fourth part of the earth with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and with wild beasts of the field.

The *fifth* represents, under the altar, the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God; and the final reward of their constancy.

The *sixth* represents an earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon becoming as blood, and the stars falling from heaven.

After the description of the opening of these *six seals*, and of the consequent visions, an *angel* is represented as sealing *one hundred forty and four thousand* with the seal of the living God; after which is introduced the choir of the *heavenly church* blessing the Almighty; and one of the *elders* shews St. John, the happiness of those who had patiently endured tribulation. (Chap. vii. *throughout.*)

The *Lamb* is then represented as opening the *seventh seal*, which is succeeded by silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; introductory to the

Second Period, which is that of the *trumpets*, given to the seven angels, already mentioned. And upon the sounding the

First trumpet, there is hail and fire mingled with blood cast down

upon the earth, representing bloody and destructive wars. On the sounding of the

Second trumpet, a great mountain, as it were burning with fire, is cast into the sea; by which a third part of it becomes blood, and a third part of the creatures in the sea die, and a third part of the ships are destroyed. On the sounding of the

Third trumpet, a great burning star falls from heaven upon a third part of the rivers, and of the fountains of waters, and a third part of the waters become bitter. On the sounding of the

Fourth trumpet, a third part of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, is darkened. And a woe is denounced by one of the angels against them that dwell on the earth, for the trumpets of the three angels who are yet to sound. On the sounding of the

Fifth trumpet, the bottomless pit is opened, and from thence issue forth *locusts* in great multitudes, not to destroy the fruits of the earth, but to torment its inhabitants. These locusts are described like horses prepared for battle, with crowns on their heads like gold, and their faces like the faces of men, their hair like the hair of women, their teeth like lions, their breast-plates like iron, the noise of their wings like that of chariots and horses, their tails like scorpions, and armed with stings; having the angel of the bottomless pit for their leader. On the sounding of the

Sixth trumpet, the four angels which were bound by the great river Euphrates are loosed, and lead up mighty armies of horsemen for the destruction of mankind. (Chap. viii. ix.)

After the *sixth* trumpet had sounded, St. John relates the marvellous vision of an angel who appeared to him in great glory, and brought him a little book, which he is commanded to eat; and then he is ordered, again, to prophesy to many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. (chap. x. *throughout.)* And thus the

THIRD PERIOD is introduced, which is pointed out by various representations:

1. By the measuring of the Temple; part of which is given to, and trodden under foot by the Gentiles; and two witnesses are represented as prophesying in sackcloth 1260 days, and then, having been put to death, are raised again from the dead; and upon the sounding of the trumpet of the *seventh* angel, their triumphs over their enemies are celebrated by the heavenly hosts! (chap. xi. 1—18.) And the temple of God being opened in heaven, and the ark of the covenant displayed, the state of the church in *this period*, is described

2. As a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and while she was in travail, assaulted by a fiery dragon, with seven heads, and ten horns, and on his heads seven crowns; and when she is delivered, her child is caught up to God; and she flies into the wilderness to avoid the dragon, where she is supported 1260 days; and the dragon

gon is vanquished by the angels: (chap. xi. 19.—xii. *throughout.*) The deplorable condition of the church in *this period* is described further,

3. By the faithful being exposed to the ravages of a wild beast, whom St. John saw in a vision rising out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, that is, ten diadems, and on his heads names of blasphemy, to whom the dragon gave his power and authority; so that the inhabitants of the earth worshipped the beast, as well as the dragon; and the beast had power to make war with the saints 42 months, or 1260 days; (which is the same space of time, during which the woman, in the *preceding vision*, is said to have been supported in the wilderness, and during which, in the *first vision*, the two witnesses are said to prophesy in sackcloth: a circumstance which plainly demonstrates these visions to be descriptive of the state of things in the *same period*, and not in *successive periods.*) And the power and authority of this beast is supported by another beast, which arose after it, and which is also particularly described. And the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, which is also said to be the number of a man, is *six hundred and sixty six.*—After which follows a sublime description of the *Lamb* standing on mount Zion, surrounded with the *one hundred and forty four thousand*, who have the name of his Father written in their foreheads, while the heavenly church celebrates the happiness of those who had continued faithful, and persevered to the end.—The next vision is of an angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel in his hand, denouncing the judgment of God to be approaching on the beast, and on them who worship him: which is likewise set forth by some succeeding representations:—And particularly,

By an order given to the *seven angels* to pour out their vials, full of the *seven last plagues*, in which the wrath of God is completed on the beast and his votaries.

The *first* vial is poured out upon the earth, and produces a grievous ulcer on them who had the mark of the beast.

The *second* vial is poured out upon the sea, which becomes blood, and every living thing in the sea dies.

The *third* vial is poured out on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, which also become blood.

The *fourth* vial is poured forth on the sun, which hath power given to it to scorch men with fire.

The *fifth* vial is poured out on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom is darkened, and his votaries gnaw their tongues, and blaspheme the God of heaven for their pains and their ulcers.

The *sixth* vial is poured out on the river Euphrates, and the water of it is dried up, so that a way is prepared for the kings of the east; against whom the worshippers of the beast are drawn up in order of battle. And then upon the pouring out of

The *seventh* vial, a voice is heard from heaven, accompanied with thunder and lightning, saying, "It is completed;" that is,

Babylon the great hath drank of the cup of the wine of God's fiercest indignation.

After the pouring out of these *vials*, one of the angels, who had executed that commission, further explains what had been represented, by describing the character of the great *harlot* who sitteth on many waters, and with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication. And then follows an account of another angel descending from heaven, declaring with a loud voice, that Babylon the great is fallen, and pointing out the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Upon which is described the triumph of the heavenly host on account of the fall of Babylon; which is further illustrated by the representation of an attack made by Christ and his army on the beast, ending in an entire victory over him. (chap. xiii.—xix.)

The Fourth Period represents an angel descending from heaven, to confine the great *dragon*, or *Satan*, in the bottomless pit for the space of a *thousand years;* during which the church is in a very peaceful and flourishing condition. (chap. xx. 1—6.)

The Fifth Period represents Satan loosed again for a little season, and making a fresh attempt for the establishment of his kingdom, which shall issue in its utter destruction. (ver. 7—10.)

The Sixth Period represents the general resurrection, the last judgment, and the utter destruction of the wicked. (ver. 11, *to the end.)*

The Seventh Period represents the vision of new heavens, and a new earth, or the happiness of the Jerusalem above, described by the sublimest figures which can enter into the human imagination. (chap. xxi. xxii.—5.)

In the conclusion of this truly marvellous series of *prophecy*, with which the *canon* of scripture closes, our blessed Lord in the most awful manner charges his faithful servant and apostle John, to reveal to the *churches* what had thus been revealed to him, and declares his own speedy approach to the final judgment; denouncing a very dreadful sentence of condemnation on those who should *add to* or *diminish* the words of the prophecy of this book. And then the sacred writer concludes the whole with a solemn benediction; (chap. xxii. 6, *to the end.)*

After all the labour and pains, which learned men have been at to explain and illustrate this book, so many articles are contained in it, which are dark and mysterious, that I remained some time undetermined, whether I should publish any commentary upon it at all. But on a more devout and attentive review, I resolved to offer to the reader what assistance I could, to enable him to comprehend its *general design*, and lead him to those practical and important

important *instructions*, which it suggests with great plainness and energy; without entering very deeply into critical inquiries concerning those particular events to which the several *prophecies* may be supposed to refer. It is an excellent observation of *Monsieur Saurin*, that *this is a very mortifying book to a mind greedy of knowledge and science, but a very satisfying and agreeable one to a heart solicitous about maxims and precepts*, for regulating our tempers and lives; or, in his own expressive and elegant words, *L'Apocalypse, qui est un des plus mortificans Ouvrages, pour un Esprit avide de Connoissance & de Lumiere, est un des plus satisfaisans pour un Cœur avide de Maximes et de Precepts. Saurin's Serm.* Vol. XII. p. 234.

A

PARAPHRASE AND NOTES

ON

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

SECT. I.

The preface, and dedication to the seven churches in Asia; including an affecting display of the Divine glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sublime songs of praise to him for redeeming love. Rev. I. 1—8.

Rev. I. 1. THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

REVELATION I. 1.

SECT. I. Rev. I. 1.

THIS is the book of *the revelation of Jesus Christ;* even that revelation, *which God* his Father *gave to him* for wise and holy purposes, *to shew to his servants the things which must shortly be;* many of which are to be very quickly accomplished, and the rest within a period of time, which, when compared with his reign in the heaven of heavens with all his saints and people, is only a short and very inconsiderable duration. *And sending* the discovery of these things *by his angel,* whose office it was to raise extraordinary signs and representations in his imagination, *he signified them to his servant John,* who had indeed been distinguished by his Master's affection in the days of his flesh; insomuch that he even lay in his bosom, and was styled, by way of eminence, the disciple whom Jesus

SECT. i.

Rev. I. 2.

Jesus loved: And *who*, being honoured with so important a message, failed not faithfully to declare it: but *testified the word of God*, which in those prophetic visions came unto him, *and the testimony of Jesus Christ*, (whose messenger the angel was,) exactly reporting *whatever he saw.*

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 *Happy* [*is*] *he that* attentively *readeth, and they that* obediently *hear the words of this prophecy, and* who *keep the things that are written in it*, fixing their mind upon them, and duly regarding them; *for the time* of their accomplishment [*is*] *at hand.*

3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

4 And considering the particular manner in which they were addressed by our blessed Lord, in some of the first of these revelations, *JOHN* dedicates and inscribes this account of the whole, *to the seven churches, which are in* the proconsular *Asia*, at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea; wishing that *grace* in the richest abundance, *and peace* in all the variety of its blessings, may [*be*] *with you* all from the Great God, the fountain of all blessings, even *from him, who is, and who was, and who is to come*[a], possessed of invariable Divine attributes and perfections; *and from the seven spirits, which are before his throne*[b], and appear as emblems of the various operations and endowments of that one blessed Spirit by whom they are actuated; *And from Jesus Christ, the* true and *faithful Witness*, whose testimony is ever to be received with the most religious regard, as being *the First-born from the dead*, the first who rose to die no more, and who as the eldest Son of the family of God, is gone to take possession of the inheritance for himself, *and* in the name of his brethren; even from him, who is *the* supreme *Ruler of* all *the kings of the earth*, and who knows how to humble them

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne:

5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful Witness, *and* the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of

a *From him who is, and who was,* &c.] The learned Grotius is of opinion, that the *nominative* case not being varied into what the *grammarians* call a *genitive*, as the common rules of *grammar* require, is designed to represent the everlasting veracity and invariableness of God, and the unchangeable majesty of Christ in the testimony of the gospel, and the glory of his kingdom.

b *The seven spirits before his throne.*] Some have explained this of the *seven archangels*, and urged it as an instance of *invocation* to them; but we may rather suppose the *Spirit of God* to be *symbolically* represented by the *seven spirits before the throne*; as it is a view very agreeable to the genius of this *emblematical* book. This, as Bishop *Burnet* observes, in support of this opinion, (see *Burnet on the articles*, p. 39) is most consistent with the prohibition of *prayer to the angels.* And if we do not suppose this to be the case, it will be a great difficulty to account for the omission of the Spirit, whose dignity must, on almost every *hypothesis*, be allowed far superior to that of the highest created angels. See Mr. *Lowman in Loc.*

c *He*

of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

them in their proudest career, and defeat their mightiest opposition to his kingdom, by deposing one, or exalting another, at his sovereign pleasure; and even removing them by a single act of his will, not only from the thrones they fill, but from the world they inhabit. This glorious Person let us all adore, conscious of our infinite obligations to him; and say *to him who hath loved us*, with the most unparalleled affection, *and* hath condescended so low, that he hath *washed us from* the otherwise indelible stains of *our sins in his own* most precious *blood*, having shed it to make satisfaction and atonement for them; *And* in consequence of this, *hath made* 6 *us kings and priests to his God and Father*, that we should reign with him in eternal life, and enjoy the perpetual pleasure of worshipping before him in his heavenly temple, and in the mean time be trained up for it by offering spiritual sacrifices: *to him* [*be*] *glory and dominion for ever and ever*, throughout the endless ages of eternity: *amen:* so let it be, for the honour of our Lord, as well as the comfort of his people, to whom he is more dear, than it is possible any separate interest of their own can be: And so it shall be; for *behold* and observe 7 with suitable regard, *he is*, as it were, even now *coming in* that pomp and majesty in which he himself described his appearance, with *the clouds* of heaven, in power and great glory; the day is so near at hand, that it may be said to be already come; *and* however men may affect to overlook and neglect him, and his interest now, *every eye shall* then *see him*[c], and every other object which at present invites their regard, shall utterly vanish; *even* all *they who* have *pierced him* shall behold him, and they that condemned him shall be arraigned at his tribunal; *and all the tribes of the earth*, who have rejected his government, and opposed his interest, *shall mourn because of him*[d], shall lament

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him: and they *also* which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall

c *He is coming in the clouds, and every eye shall see him.*] It is surprising, that Dr. Whitby should interpret these words as relating to the temporal calamities to befall the Jews when the destruction of Jerusalem was long since past. And whatever slaughter was made of the Jews in Lybia, Smyrna, Alexandria, and other places afterwards, it could by no means be called, *the coming of Christ in the clouds* by way of eminence: even though that *phrase* might be allowed applicable to remarkable *temporal* vengeance, inflicted by the providence, and in the cause of Christ.

d *All the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of him.*] In this verse is prefixed the *great moral*, which the whole book is designed to illustrate; *namely*, that though there

SECT. i.

lament that fatal opposition, by which, instead of prevailing in the least against him, they have only effected their own destruction. "*Yea,* Rev. I. 7. Lord, we repeat our joyful accent: *amen:* come, Lord Jesus, in the clouds of heaven; take to thyself thy great power and reign; thy people shall lift up their heads with joy and triumph, being infallibly assured, that their complete redemption is approaching." And to confirm their faith and hope, let them hear him speaking as it were, by his own majestic voice from heaven, and saying, *I am the Alpha and the Omega: the beginning and the end:* I was before all worlds, and shall continue the same, when all the revolutions of this world are over, and the final scenes relating to it shall be concluded. I am the First and the Last; I am he, *saith the Lord* Jehovah, *who is, and who was, and who is to come,* the eternal, the unchangable, *the Almighty*[e] Author, Supporter, and Disposer of all things.

shall wail because of him; even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what sublimity doth this *wonderful book* open! which, though pregnant with inexplicable *mysteries,* is at the same time pregnant with *instruction;* which the weakest of *Christ's* humble disciples may peruse with sacred complacency and delight. For surely we are not to imagine that Divine *book* to be Ver. unfit for our perusal, and undeserving our regard, concerning 3 which its Divine *Author* expressly declares, *Blessed is he that readeth*

there should be great opposition made against the cause and kingdom of Christ, yet it should be utterly in vain; and his kingdom should triumph in the most illustrious manner; so that all who had opposed it, should have the greatest reason to *mourn.* And as this series of Divine prophecy begins, so it ends with this sentiment, and with the joyful *consent* of his faithful servants to this glorious truth, which should fill the enemies of Christ with such terror and dismay. Compare chap. xxii. 20.

e *I am the Alpha,* &c.] This has been interpreted by many as spoken by the Father; but it will be very difficult to give sufficient proof of it. Most of the *phrases,* which are here used concerning this glorious Person, are afterwards used concerning *our Lord Jesus Christ;* and παντοκράτωρ, though in *ecclesiastical* writers of the earliest ages, generally, so far as I can find appropriated to the Father, may according to the *Syriac version,* be rendered, *He who holds,* that is, superintends, supports, and governs *all*; and then it is applied to Christ, Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3. But if, after all, the words should be understood as spoken by the Father, our Lord's applying so many of these titles afterwards to himself, plainly proves his partaking with the Father in the glory *peculiar* to the Divine nature, and incommunicable to any creature. See Bishop *Pearson on the Creed,* p. 175.—Dr. *Clarke* contends that the word παντοκράτωρ is peculiar to the Father, (compare *Clarke on the Trinity, Numb.* 414, and *Posth. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 70,) yet he intimates, that Christ may have the title of *Alpha and Omega,* as *Author and Finisher of our faith,* Beginner and Completer of our salvation. Heb. xii. 2.

cth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy! Thanks be to our heavenly Father, that he *gave it to his son Jesus Christ.* Thanks to the Son of God, that he *gave it to his servant John*, to be transmitted down to future generations. SECT. i. Ver. 1

Let us attentively view the *Divine glory* of the Father, and of his *only begotten Son, who is the brightness of that glory, and the express image of his Person*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, who is here represented by the *seven spirits before the throne.* From us, and 4
from all created nature, let there be glory to him *that is, and that was, and that is to come*, and to *the First-born from the dead*, who 5
is *superior to all the kings of the earth*, and to all the angels of heaven, who is so intimately united with the Father in Divine perfections and glories, that he also is the *Alpha and Omega*, 8
the Beginning and the End: that he also is *almighty:* able by his mighty power *to subdue all things to himself;* and is the same *yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Never let us be unmindful of the condescension of the *Son of God*, in becoming for our redemption and salvation the *Son of man.* Let the great things he has done for us, the great things he has taught us to expect from him, be ever familiar to our minds. How astonishing was that *love*, which engaged him *to wash us from our sins in his own* 5
blood! How glorious is that exaltation to which he is raising us! rendering us, even in the present world, *kings and priests to God*, and inspiring us with the ardent hope of an immutable kingdom, and an everlasting priesthood in the temple of our God above. This is the sublime and transcendent happiness of all who with lively faith *look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This* illustrious Personage is *coming in the clouds*, and our eyes shall *see him:* too often already have we *pierced* him; let us now look up to him with an humble and lively faith; let us *mourn* over our sins at present, that we may not pour forth floods of unprofitable tears in that awful day; as *all the tribes of the earth* shall do, who have dared to set themselves against the kingdom of *Christ;* a kingdom which shall then be triumphant over all opposition, the *last* of its *enemies* being vanquished and destroyed.

SECT. II.

St. John gives an account of the circumstances and manner of our Lord's appearance to him, when he received the revelation in Patmos. Rev. I. 9—16.

SECT. ii.

Rev. I. 9.

REVELATION I. 9.

I *JOHN*, who was formerly distinguished by the name of the disciple whom Jesus loved [a], *who am also your brother*, O ye Christians, *and* who have the honour to be a *partaker* with you all *in* the *tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ:* with all I say, who are called to the hope of his kingdom, and in the patient expectation of that, endure with cheerfulness the afflictions which his infinite wisdom is pleased to appoint us: I *was in the* desart and disconsolate *island* of the Ægean Sea, *called Patmos* [b], to which I was banished by Domitian the emperor, *for the sake of the word of God*, manifested in the gospel, *and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*, which I had endeavoured
10 faithfully to maintain. *I was* on a sudden *in the Spirit*, under his miraculous energy, *on* that blessed day which we Christians are accustomed to call *the Lord's day* [c], the first day of the week, which our dear Redeemer has rendered sacred and venerable, by his resurrection from the dead on the morning of it; *and* though I was then incapable of joining in any worshipping assembly, the want of that privilege was amply made up, by that manifestation with which the Lord of the day was pleased to favour me; for I *heard*

Rev. I. 9.

I JOHN, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day: and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

a

a *I John* the disciple whom Jesus loved.] So I boldly *paraphrase* these words, trusting to the general *tradition* of the church upon this head, of which I have taken notice in the Introduction; and I think, there is some *similarity* in the phraseology here, and in the gospel of St. John, though I am sensible, at the same time, there is a greater elevation of style in some parts of this book, than is to be found in the other writings of this *apostle;* which is not to be wondered at, considering the *extraordinary* nature of the *scenes* he records; which had a very natural tendency to raise the style, and perhaps might have elevated it in any *future* writings, in consequence of the wonderful and sublime ideas which now passed through his mind.

b *Island called Patmos. Ecclesiastical history* tells us, that St. John was here employed in digging in a mine, being banished hither by Domitian the emperor, after he had come unhurt out of a cauldron of boiling oil. But the *historical* evidence produced for this great event, is very uncertain.

c *In the spirit on the Lord's day.*] It is so very unnatural, and contrary to the use of the *word* in all other authors, to interpret this of the Jewish sabbath, as Mr. *Baxter* justly argues at large, (see his *Works*, Vol. III. p. 798,) that I cannot but conclude with him, and the generality of Christian writers on this subject, that this text strongly infers the *extraordinary* regard paid to the *first day of the week* in the *apostle's* time, as a day solemnly consecrated to Christ, in memory of his resurrection from the dead.

a great voice behind me, as loud *as* the sound *of a trumpet*, *Which said* in distinct and articulate accents, *I*, who am going to appear to thee, O John, *am the Alpha and the Omega*[d], *the First and the Last;* I boast Divine perfections and glories, and assume without robbery and usurpation, the peculiar titles and prerogatives of the one eternal, infinite and unchangeable Jehovah; and I am now descended from heaven, to give thee a revelation of the most astonishing and important events. *And*, as even the remotest ages are concerned in *what thou seest, write* an exact account of it *in a book, and send* copies of [*it*] *to the seven churches in Asia*[e], *to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea*, that each may receive its own lesson, and at the same time, enjoy the benefit of those which are intended for all the rest. *And I turned to see the* Person who uttered that wonderful *voice which spake unto me: and being* thus *turned, I saw* an astonishing scene, the particulars of which I shall now relate: There were *seven golden lamps* on their stands, which gave a bright and beautiful flame; *And in the midst of the seven* golden *lamps*, there was [*one*] in a human form, a glorious and majestic Person, *like* him who appeared to Daniel under the title of *the Son of man*, and in whom I traced the lineaments of that blessed Redeemer, whom I had so long known under that endearing name and character; he appeared *clothed in a long robe*, not unlike the priestly vestment, *and* like persons of that holy order, *girded*, not about the middle, but something higher, *about the breasts with*

SECT. ii.

Rev. I. 11.

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

12

13

d I *am Alpha and Omega.*] That these titles should be repeated so soon, in a connection which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the *eighth verse.* The argument drawn, in the *preceding note* upon it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this had been found; but its immediate connection with this, greatly strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that *this text* has done more than any other in the Bible, toward preventing me from giving into *that scheme*, which would make our *Lord Jesus Christ* no more than a *deified creature.*

e *Seven churches in Asia.*] I presume not to enquire, Whether these were the only *Asiatic churches.* To be sure they were the *principal.* Nor will I enquire, why the *epistles* were appropriated to the *churches* of that province. It is certain they contain many things of *universal* concern; and as there is plainly an intention to represent the regard of Christ to ministers, and churches, by his *walking among golden candlesticks, and holding stars in his right-hand*, the number *seven* may be mentioned, as it seems best to harmonize with some other parts of this book, namely, with the *seven seals, seven trumpets, seven vials, seven thunders*, and *seven spirits before the throne.*

SECT. ii.

with a golden girdle[f], which being properly fastened there, hung down to his feet. And *his head, even* [*his*] *hairs* which adorned it, and flowed round his shoulders, [*were*] *white as wool*, or to speak more properly, *as white as snow*, (Dan. vii. 9;) *and his eyes* [*were*] vivid and piercing *as a flame of fire; And his feet* were resplendent *like fine brass, when purified in a furnace* from all its dross, and polished by the hands of some skilful artificer; *and his voice* was loud *as the voice of many waters*, so that I imagined it might have been heard as far as the sounding noise of the billows of the sea, when they beat against the rocky shores; *And he had in his right hand, seven* luminous and very beautiful *stars*, the motions of which he seemed to direct and govern, at the same time that he supported them; *and out of his mouth there went a sharp two-edged sword*, or dagger, capable of piercing and wounding every way; *and his countenance* [*was*] radiant and glorious *as the sun*, [*when he*] *shineth in* all *his* meridian *power* and lustre, and beams forth his rays, vigorous and unclouded.

Rev. I. 14.

14 His head, and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 9 WHAT unspeakable happiness can our *blessed Redeemer* confer on his faithful servants, while suffering in his cause! How wretched was *Cæsar* on his imperial throne, compared with this despised and persecuted disciple of *Christ*, in his old age banished to the desolate island of *Patmos! There* his Lord condescended to visit him, opened his eyes to *prophetic* visions, and diffused around him celestial glories. May we in no case be ashamed *of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ*, a zeal for which was so graciously acknowledged, so gloriously rewarded.

10 It was *on the Lord's day* that the apostle was *in the Spirit:* how often has the *Spirit of God* visited his people at that sacred season, visited them as well in their *secret* retirements as in the *public* assembly;

f *A golden girdle.*] The girdles were a kind of *sash*, which first went over the neck like a *tippet*, were crossed on the *breast*, and then went round the lower part of the breast, two or three times, like a modern *circingle*, and then they fell down almost to the feet. And as they were sometimes *embroidered*, and sometimes *fringed with gold*, they must make a very ornamental part of dress. The *priests* were required, for coolness and decency, to wear linen garments, and gird themselves higher than others. Compare Ezek. xliv. 17, 18. And this is one of the many allusions to the *temple* and its forms and customs, with which we shall find this *book* so greatly to abound. Compare Exod. xxxix. 5.

assembly; when the hand of *Providence*, as in the instance before us, and not their own *negligence*, and *indifference* to Divine ordinances, occasioned their absence from them: otherwise we might fear that those raptures of mind, which in the contempt of ordinances some make their boast and glory, arise from the *artifices* of the great enemy of souls, and are to be numbered among the most dangerous engines by which he attempts our ruin. SECT. ii. Ver.

Let our souls again bend, in humble veneration, to him who is *the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega.* As if we heard his awful voice proclaiming himself by these illustrious and Divine titles; let us *turn*, as it were, *to behold him;* and by these marvellous visions in which he manifested himself to *St. John*, let us endeavour to form some imperfect ideas of our blessed Lord, and the magnificence and glory with which he appears to the inhabitants of the heavenly regions. Every circumstance, not excepting the minutest and most inconsiderable, attending this appearance of *Christ* to his *beloved apostle*, seems designed to convey some Divine truth, some important lesson, for the contemplation and instruction of future ages. It was, in *general*, beyond all question, intended to impress us with the lowliest *reverence* of our glorified Redeemer, that we may pay him our humble and devout adoration, and thus in some degree anticipate the pleasure with which we hope to appear in his *immediate presence* above. 11 12 13, 16

SECT. III.

Our Lord Jesus Christ addresses himself to the Apostle John, and charges him with an epistle to each of the seven Asiatic churches already mentioned; and in the first place, with the epistle to the church of Ephesus. Rev. I. 17.—II. 7.

Rev. I. 17. AND when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right-hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear

Revelation I. 17.

I HAVE just been describing the appearance of Jesus Christ to me, with which I was favoured on the Lord's day, in the island of Patmos, while I was engaged in such devout sentiments as were suitable to the time and occasion: *and* I now add, that *when I saw him* in this awful, this glorious and resplendent form, I was perfectly overwhelmed with the majesty of his appearance, so that *I fell down at his feet as dead; and* he immediately condescended to raise me up, with great indulgence; for *he laid his right hand upon me*, [*and*] *said to me, Fear not* John, for SECT. iii. Rev. I. 17.

SECT. iii.

Rev. I. 18.

for I appear to thee for purposes of mercy; *I am*, indeed, as I have proclaimed myself, *the First and the Last*, possessed of Divine perfections and glories; And yet I still wear the human form, which I assumed for the redemption of human and fallen creatures like thyself; *I* [*am*] *he who lives*, and have life immortal, and glory immutable in myself, though I *was* once *dead*, as thou knowest; *and* now *behold* it both with joy and wonder, *I am living for ever and ever: [Amen*[a]*:* be it so then, O Lord; mayest thou for ever live and reign!) *And* he added, *I have the keys of the unseen world*[b], *and of death;* I have a supreme dominion over it, and remove the souls of men from world to world, calling them out of the body, and fixing them in the invisible state, according to my pleasure, till at length I shall exert my power of raising the dead.

Fear not: I am the First and the Last.

18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 *Write* therefore *the things which thou* now *seest*, *and those which* will be opened to thy view, in which there will be, in part, a reference to the things which already *are, and* a further reference to *the things which shall hereafter be.*

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 And, as a general key to what I am now going to dictate, observe, that *as to the mystery of the seven stars, which thou* here *seest* as *in my right-hand, and of the seven lamps* which *are of gold: the seven stars are* an emblematical representation of *the angels*, or presiding ministers, *of the seven churches; and the seven lamps which thou seest, are* a representation of *the seven churches* themselves, to which I have directed thee to inscribe and transmit the important epistles I am now about to dictate, according to what I observe

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right-hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

a *Amen.*] As this word appears to have additional force, if understood as expressing the joyful *assent* of John to what was delivered, I have inclosed it and the *paraphrase* upon it in a *parenthesis.*

b *Unseen world.*] It must be allowed, that ἅδης sometimes signifies the *grave*, when the *body* only is spoken of. But, as Mr. *Howe* has largely proved in his excellent discourse on this *text*, the interpretation I have here given, is most reasonable. That which would refer it to *hell* as the seat of the *damned*, limits the sense in a manner very derogatory from the honour of our blessed Redeemer, as he there shews unanswerably. *Howe's Works*, Vol. II. p 61, &c. According to *Grotius* (see his note on Mat. xvi. 18,) the word *hades*, always denotes either *death*, or *the state after death*, and they who are of opinion, that Luke xvi. 23, is an exception, may consult this learned author's judicious *notes* on this place. Our English, or rather Saxon word, *hell*, in its original signification, though it is now understood in a more limited sense,) exactly answers to the Greek word, *hades*, and denotes a *concealed*, or *unseen* place: and this sense of the word is still retained in the *eastern*, and especially, in the *western* counties of England, to *hele* over a thing, is to *cover* it. See Lord *King's History of the Creed*, chap. iv.

c Respective

serve of their respective circumstances and necessities [c]. SECT. iii.

CHAP. II. 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

And in the first place, address *to the angel*, or presiding officer [d], *of the church of Ephesus*, and *write* thus, *These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand*, to signify that he is the great Support of his ministering servants, and directs their several situations and motions in the churches; and *who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps*, to intimate thereby his presence among Christian societies, and his particular inspection over them. Rev. II. 1.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:

My eyes have been carefully fixed upon thee, and I have observed many things in thy conduct with pleasure. *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience*, with which thou hast endured the trials and sufferings to which thou hast been called out; *and* I know thou hast such a zeal for the honour of my gospel, and the establishment of my kingdom, *that thou canst not bear those who are evil* [e]. *And*, as false pretensions to a Divine mission and inspiration are so common, I know *thou hast tried those, who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them* [*to be*] *liars*, and rejected their pretensions with a becoming disdain. *And* I know *thou hast sustained*, with exemplary fortitude, the trouble they 2

3 And hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast 3

c Respective circumstances and necessities.] How exactly the address in each *epistle*, suits the state of the church to which it was sent, and what *condescension* is implied in our Saviour's giving them these distinct notices and admonitions, is in some measure, though very imperfectly, illustrated in my *Ten Sermons on the Power and Grace of Christ*. See *Serm.* vii.

d *To the angel*, or presiding officer.] That there was *one pastor*, who presided in each of these *churches*, is indeed evident from the expression here used; but that he was a *diocesan bishop*, or had several congregations of Christians under his care, can by no means be proved. Nor is there the least hint of it, that I know of, in any of *these epistles*. Many have shewn from ancient Jewish writings, that there was an *officer* of the *synagogue* who had the name of *angel*. See *Vitring. de Synag. Vet. lib.* 3. p. ii. c. 3. And Dr. Lightfoot adds, that from his office of overlooking the *reader of the law*, he was called חזן or *episcopus*. Compare Mal. ii. 7.

e *Canst not bear those who are evil.*] This has been pleaded by Lord Barrington, as an argument that the church of Ephesus, in the early days of Christianity, recovered itself from those corruptions which some endeavoured to bring into it, (2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 17—26; iii. 6—10;) and which St. Paul, in his *first epistle* to Timothy, endeavoured, it seems, with some happy success, to prevent. *Misc. Sac.* Vol. I. p. 42. *Limborch* has sufficiently shewn, (see his *Theol. lib.* v. *cap.* 37. § 19) the absurdity of opposing such a text as this to the great Christian doctrine of *toleration*, which some have madly endeavoured to prejudice by trifling *inferences* from such detached and perverted clauses, in opposition to the tenor of the *whole* New Testament. But the pretending to enforce such *ecclesiastical* censures as the laws of Christ do indeed in some cases require, with those *secular* terrors which the *magistrate*, by virtue of his office, is to inflict on immoralities prejudicial to society, has been the destruction of *Christian discipline*, in *popish* countries universally, and generally in all *protestant* establishments too.

f *Lost*

SECT. iii.

Rev. II. 3.

they have given thee; *and hast* exercised invincible *patience* under all thy sufferings and trials in my cause; *and thou hast laboured* constantly and tenaciously *for my name's sake*, and to establish the faith of my people: *and hast not*
4 *fainted* under thy toils or tribulations. *Nevertheless, I have* [*something*] to alledge *against thee*, exemplary as thou art in many respects; and it is this, *That thou hast lost* the zeal and fervour of *thy first love*[f] to me and my cause; and this cannot but be very displeasing to me.
5 *Remember therefore from what thou art fallen;* recall those better days to thy memory, *and* in the view of them set thyself seriously to *repent* of the decay which hath so much prevailed; *and do the first works*, or rather endeavour to exceed them. *Otherwise* thou must expect, that *I will come unto thee quickly*, in some awful dispensations of Providence, *and take away thy lamp out of its place, unless thou repent*[g]; no longer shalt thou continue to be a church, if thou dost not endeavour to recover thy lost ground, and to shine at least with thy former lustre.
6 *Nevertheless, thou hast this* honour and praise remaining, *that thou hatest the* impure *works of the* lewd *Nicolaitans*[h], *which I also hate*, as having brought so great a reproach upon the Chris-
7 tian name: To conclude: *Let him that hath an ear,*

hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear

f *Lost thy first love.*] It is very plain, that these *epistles*, though inscribed to the *angels* or *pastors* of the churches, are directed to the *churches themselves*, as represented by them. Just as the *Jewish church* was represented by Joshua, their high priest, Zech. iii. 1. But it is not improbable, that where some of the *churches* are blamed, there might be in their *ministers* some faults correspondent to those charged upon the society; and particularly, that the zeal of this minister of Ephesus might be declining. There is, I think, no reason to be anxious with regard to Timothy's character on this account; for it can never be proved that he was a *stated pastor* of the church of Ephesus, though such confident things have been said concerning it on very slender foundations.

g *Take away thy lamp out of its place.*] As this threatening is addressed to the *church* of Ephesus, though much better than some other *churches*, it is reasonable to believe, that it, like other denunciations, was intended to awaken the rest. It intimates how terrible a thing it would be to have the *gospel taken away* from them. And indeed it has been executed upon them all in a very awful manner. For though there be a little congregation, if I remember right, at Smyrna, yet most of these *churches* are quite ruined, and with them the cities in which they stood, though they were once very celebrated. And it is hardly possible, even for one who is not a Christian, to view the account which Sir Paul Ricaut, and the learned and ingenious Mr. Smith, have given of them, without being tenderly affected with so lamentable a catastrophe.

h *Nicolaitans.*] Some have thought these heretics derived their name from Nicolas, one of the *seven deacons*; and some *ancient writers* have asserted it. But the name was so common among the Jews, that little argument can be drawn from thence. See *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib.* iii. *c.* 26. The substance of what *ancient writers* say concerning them is, that they taught the *lawfulness* of *lewdness* and *idolatrous sacrifices*, esteeming them things indifferent in their own nature; and their *practices* were suitable to such *principles*. Compare ver. 14, 15.

ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

ear, hear what the Spirit saith to all *the churches* for their encouragement; to that of Ephesus in particular: *To him who conquers* the enemies, which lie in the way of his duty and happiness, and manfully breaks through all oppositions, *I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God:* the fruit of which gives immortality, and it is situated in the paradise above; so that he who resides within its reach, is possessed of such felicities and delights as are far superior to those which Adam enjoyed in an earthly paradise, though in a state of uncorrupted and perfect innocence. SECT. iii. Rev. II. 7.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH whatever humble and holy reverence this awful representation of our *blessed Redeemer* may strike us, let us be encouraged to look up to him by a lively faith, and to hear with joy, and with purposes of the most grateful obedience, the gracious declaration he makes of that amazing *contrast* of Divine perfections and characters, and of human weaknesses and infirmities, which met in him. *The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last,* is he who *lives and yet was dead,* but is now *alive for evermore:* for us he became liable to death, but is now risen to a Divine and immortal life; in which consideration let us continually rejoice on his account, and on our own. It is exceedingly reviving to the heart of a sincere *Christian,* that *Jesus* has the *keys of the unseen world, and of death:* so that whenever we are removed by the stroke of this our last enemy, it is only to be considered as his turning the *key,* which will let us out of this world into another, of happiness and glory everlasting. How delightful to reflect, that *heaven* is under the command of our Redeemer, and *hell* is under his controul! What have his faithful servants to fear from *the one?* what have they not to hope from the *other?* How does this cheering sentiment disarm both *life* and *death,* of their respective terrors! Chap. i. 17, 18

Let us attend to each of these excellent *epistles,* which *Christ* condescended himself to dictate, and to address by the hand of his *servant John,* to these *Asiatic churches.* Let us attend to his *titles,* his *admonitions,* his *promises,* that we may be awed with holy reverence, that we may be animated to humble hope, and steady courage, in every encounter with the enemies of our salvation.

Let the *ministers of Christ* rejoice, that they are as *stars in the* Chap. ii. 1.

SECT. iii.

Ver. *right-hand*, of their Redeemer. "Support them, *O Lord*, by thy almighty power, and guide all their motions by thine infinite wisdom." Let all the *churches of Christ* remember, that he *walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks;* may they be *pure gold:* may their lamps *shine* with unsullied lustre, that their Father may be glorified, and their Saviour delighted with the survey.

2, 3 He *sees our labour, our patience*, our fidelity, and our zeal. May he see that we *cannot bear* those who would corrupt our religion, without exerting ourselves to silence their false pretensions, and to guard the *churches*, to which we are related especial-
6 ly, from the *venom* they might diffuse over them! In all these respects, may we daily approve ourselves to him in a more perfect manner. But, *alas!* does he not perceive in many of us, what he complained so early of, in the church of *Ephesus;* that we
4 have *lost our first love*, and that much of that zeal with which we set out in religion is declined? If so, let us take the alarm: for dreadful indeed would it be, to have our *candlestick removed out of its place;* to have the gospel and all its privileges taken away from
5 us. To prevent this awful judgment, let us *recollect from whence we are fallen*, if we are indeed in a backsliding and declining state; and humbly and heartily *repent*, and vigorously exert ourselves against the enemies of our salvation: that *overcoming* the difficulties of this howling wilderness, we may be received to the enjoyments
7 of the heavenly country: and when we can no longer share in the bounties of providence in this inferior state, be feasted with the fruit of the *tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

SECT. IV.

The epistles which Christ orders St. John to write to the churches of Smyrna and Pergamos. Rev. II. 8—17.

SECT. iv.

Rev. II. 8.

REVELATIONS II. 8.

AND to the angel, or minister, *of the church of Smyrna, write, These things saith the First and the Last;* that glorious and Divine Person, *who* having assumed the human nature into a union with Deity, is able to say, he *was dead and is alive;* who therefore demands by all considerations of reverence, gratitude and love, thy most attentive audience, and most obedient
9 regard: *I know thy works* to have been in many respects very extraordinary; *and* I am well acquainted

REV. II. 8.

AND unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the First and the Last which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty,

verty, (but thou art rich;) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

acquainted with thy *tribulation and poverty*[a], with the humble opinion thou hast of thyself; *but* I know also that *thou art rich* in faith, and in all its genuine effects, and art daily laying up for thyself an increasing treasure in heaven. *And* [*I* also *know*] *the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not*[b], *but* while they boast their relation to the synagogue of Moses, [*are*] indeed *the synagogue of Satan*, whose temper they breathe in their opposition to my gospel, and to my people, while they blasphemously pretend a zeal for my name, even in their impieties. But let all my faithful servants be encouraged boldly to face their opposition; and I say to each of them, in addressing to thee, *Fear none of the things which thou shalt suffer;* for, *behold*, I inform you, that *the devil*, acting in and by these instruments, the men of his synagogue, *will* indeed have a permission to *cast some of you into prison*[c]; *that you may be tried*, and by these trials more remarkably approved; *and ye shall have tribulation ten days*[d]; for a certain limited time, he shall be permitted to afflict you; but bear up courageously against his assaults, as becomes my valiant soldiers: *be thou faithful unto death*[e], persevere in thy attachment to me, and thy zeal for my interest, even to the last, though death in its most terrible form should assault

SECT. iv.

Rev. II. 9.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful

10

a *And poverty*] Archbishop Wake supposes this refers to the extraordinary character of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna; who had, as *ecclesiastical history* tells us, reduced himself to a voluntary *poverty*, as many of the primitive bishops did, by selling his estate, and distributing it to the poor. But I much question, whether the personal character of the bishop, or pastor of these churches, be referred to in this address: and the very next verse seems to demonstrate it is not. Compare also ver. 5.

b *Say they are Jews, and are not.*] There were great numbers of Jews in the *proconsular Asia;* and their inveteracy against the *gospel* there and elsewhere, is well known. This is an instance, in which the word *Jew* signifies one of God's *peculiar* people; and it is not improbable, that many *prophetic* phrases, in which Jewish rites are mentioned, are to be interpreted with as great a latitude; that is, for those rites of worship which God's *peculiar people* should use.

c *Cast some of you into prison.*] Whether the power of the *synagogue* extended so far as to *imprison*, I do not certainly know; to *scourging* it undoubtedly extended.

d *Tribulation ten days.*] Mr. *Fleming, (of the Resurrection,* p. 129,) with many others, thinks this refers to the persecution under Domitian, which continued about *ten years*, and was begun when John was banished into Patmos, and saw these *revelations*. But it may only signify a short and limited time. Compare Gen. xxxi. 7; 1 Sam. i. 8; Eccl. vii. 19; Dan. i. 12; Zech. viii. 23.

e *Be thou faithful unto death*, &c.] I have endeavoured at large to illustrate the great force of this *noble* text in my *funeral sermon* for that illustrious Christian hero, Colonel Gardiner, whose name I could not forbear recording here; and the *memoirs* of whose *life*, which from the most intimate knowledge of him I have written, will, I hope, promote the admiration, love, and imitation of all who peruse them.

SECT. IV.

assault thee; for thou fightest under a General, who, though thou fall by the stroke of this last enemy, can raise thee again; *and* instead of losing by thy fidelity to me, thou shalt be richly rewarded: for *I will give thee a crown of* eternal *life*, and advance thee to such glory and felicity, as shall be infinitely more than an equivalent for the utmost thou canst possibly suffer in my cause. *He that hath an ear* to hear, *let him* be all attention to *hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: The* valiant *conqueror shall* be secured from evils, which are beyond all comparison greater than any he can endure on earth. In this world he may indeed encounter the first death for my sake; but he shall *not be injured* hereafter *by the second;* he shall rest in everlasting security and peace, while those who desert and renounce their duty for the preservation of this transitory life, shall be consigned to that state of misery, where they shall seek *death*, but it shall for ever flee from them.

Rev. II. 10. ful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.

12 *And to the angel*, or minister, *of the church which* [*is*] *in Pergamos, write, These things saith he, who* in token of the penetrating and efficacious nature of his word, is represented as one who *has the sharp two-edged sword* coming out of his mouth: even that word, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword: *I know thy works*, and thy circumstances, in every respect; *and* particularly, *where thou dwellest;* [*even*] *where the throne of Satan* [*is*] fixed, in the midst of superstition, and in the midst of persecution, by the union of which the kingdom of darkness is supported; *and thou holdest fast* the honour of *my name*, *and hast not denied* and renounced *my faith*, *even in those days* of extreme difficulty and danger *in which Antipas* [*was*] *my faithful martyr*[f], and sealed his fidelity to me with his blood; even that dear and resolute Christian, *who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*, and seems to take up his residence, as might be inferred from the

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is;* and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

f *Antipas my faithful martyr.*] *Ecclesiastical history* has not informed us who this Antipas was. Perhaps he was some zealous *minister*, who died for the faith he had preached; or some private Christian of *obscure* birth, rank, and circumstances, *ennobled* by enduring *martyrdom* in the Christian cause. But we may be sure that such condescending notice taken of him by his Divine Master, who mentions his name with affection and regard, would be, instead of a thousand arguments, to animate the courage and fidelity of *other Christians*, who might be called out to the like extremities.

g Balaamites,

SECT. IV.

Rev. II. 14.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh I will give to eatof the hidden manna, and will give him

the enormities which are continually practising there. *Nevertheless, I have a few things* to alledge *against thee, that thou hast there them* who remain uncensured in your societies, *who hold* what is, in effect, *the* detestable *doctrine of that* infamous *Balaam, who taught Balak*, king of Moab, *to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel*, by which they fell into sin and ruin; encouraging and seducing them *to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.* These practices are tolerated by some among you; whom therefore it becomes you to search out, and to treat with due severity; for *thou in like manner hast those that hold the doctrine of the* accursed Balaamities, or wicked *Nicolaitans*[g], *which I hate. Repent* therefore of these irregularities: *or otherwise* thou mayest depend upon it, that *I will come unto thee quickly* in a way of chastisement, *and I will fight against them with the* sharp *sword* [*that cometh out*] *of my mouth;* I will pronounce terrible calamities against you, and execute upon you what I have threatened in my word. *He that hath an ear* at all, capable of hearing, *let him hear* with the greatest attention, *what the Spirit saith to the churches: To the conqueror, I will give* the privilege of being, as it were, admitted into the most holy place; and there he shall have liberty *to eat of the hidden manna;* and shall be entertained with those sacred pleasures, which

15 16 17

g Balaamites, or *Nicolaitans.*] As Balaam has the same signification in Hebrew which Nicolaus has in Greek, and both signify *conquerors of the people*, (which name might probably be given to the celebrated Balaam, on account of the great influence which he had in the place where he lived,) it seems not improbable, that the *doctrine of* Balaam, and of the Nicolaitans, might be the *same;* (or the latter might be more strenuous in justifying and propagating their doctrine, and acting upon it.) As if he had said, Balaam taught Balak to lay a stumbling-block before the children *of Israel;* and *thou hast also them that hold the doctrine of the Balaamites.* Probably this *doctrine* might be like that of some *modern* seducers, that it was lawful to dissemble the Christian faith, and to conform to established superstition, to prevent persecution; a *fatal error*, which tends most effectually to overthrow Christianity; the existence of which, in these later ages, is owing to the contrary doctrine and practice. And I greatly fear, that millions of souls are continually sacrificed to it, especially in France, and other countries, in which *protestant* churches were once planted, but are now overthrown. Nor can it be hoped, that the *reformed* interest will ever revive, till a few of its professors at least have the courage to *die* for the truth, and scatter their blood as the *seed of the church.* An anonymous writer, (in the *Memoirs of Liter.* Vol. V. p. 258,) thinks, that by Balaamites, or Nicolaitans, (which he also supposes the same,) we are, in general, to understand *lewd and profligate persons*, who aim at nothing but their own *secular* advantage, and pleads in favour of his opinion, ver. 20; iii. 9; viii. 11; ix. 11; xi. 8, in all which places *proper names* are used in such a *figurative* manner, to express characters resembling theirs whose names are thus used.

SECT. iv.

which God's sanctuary above affords, and of which the manna that fell in the wilderness, and was laid up in a golden vessel before the Lord, was only an imperfect type. *And I will give him a white stone*[h], in token of full absolution from all his crimes; *and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, except he who receiveth it*[i]; I will admit him to that intimacy of sacred friendship, from whence results a joy which the stranger intermeddles not with, and which can be only conceived by those who happily experience it.

Rev. II. 17. him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 8 AGAIN let us direct our eyes to that glorious Person, who is *the First and the Last;* and who, though it may appear incompatible with that Divine title, was once dead, *and is alive again;* 12 and since he is here awfully represented as with *a sharp sword going out of his mouth*, let us be greatly concerned, that we do not incur his displeasure by our irregular conduct, lest he smite, 9 or even destroy us. Let us observe and imitate what he commends in the churches whom he here addresses; their *humility* in being sensible of their *poverty*, when enriched by his *grace;* their *pa-* 13 *tience*, their *diligence*, and the resolution with which they *retained the honour of his name*, notwithstanding the *throne of Satan* was in the midst of them, and the rage of persecution had destroyed *Antipas* before their eyes; that blessed, that triumphant hero, whose *fidelity*

h *A white stone.*] It is well known, that among the Greeks, a *white stone* was a token of *absolution*, as a *black stone* was of *condemnation*; but the writing a *new name* upon this stone is not, that I know of, illustrated by any ancient practice. And the connection between the two ideas seems to be this, That in the great day, on which the absolution of Christ's people was to be declared publicly, they were to be admitted into that intimate converse, and high state of favour, which is signified by the *new name;* which *last* circumstance plainly alludes to the custom of *princes*, who give *new names* to those whom they have raised to very extraordinary *dignity;* of which we have many instances in the Old Testament; particularly, Gen. xli. 45; 2 Sam. xii. 25: Dan. i. 7. Dr. *Goodman* thinks this an allusion to the token, or *ticket*, given to the conqueror in the *Olympic games*, expressing his *name*, and signifying the *reward* he was to receive for his atchievements. See his *Par. of the Prod.* p. 307.

i *No man knoweth, except he who receiveth it.*] I have sometimes thought, ὁ λαμβανων, may signify, *one that has received it*, as it seems a *name* given to any person, must be known *to others*, or it would be given in vain; and then it intimates, that honour shall be conferred on such an one, which shall only be known to the inhabitants of *that world* to which he shall be admitted, and who have already received it. Otherwise, it must refer to a custom which has sometimes prevailed among *princes*, of giving particular names, expressing *familiarity* and *delight*, to distinguished favourites, by which to call them in the greatest familiarity of converse, whether by *discourse*, or by *letter*, and which have not been communicated to others, or used by them at other times. I have hinted at both in the *paraphrase*, not being able in my own mind certainly to determine, which is the peculiar and more exact sense.

fidelity and constancy his Divine Saviour commemorates with approbation, and even with satisfaction and pleasure. Who would not be ambitious of dying in the same manner, were it ever so severe and terrible, to be thus honoured and celebrated by our Lord *Jesus Christ*, or any of his faithful *apostles?* Let us not be terrified at the apprehension of what we may suffer from the malice of *Satan*, and by his instruments, even though not merely *imprisonment*, but *death* itself were to await us. It is only for a *limited* time that he can occasion *tribulation* to any of the people of God; and our blessed Lord will never be unmindful of that gracious promise, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* O! let us by faith survey that innumerable company, who, though they have fallen by the stroke of the *first death*, have been, and shall for ever be, *unhurt by the second:* that blessed society who are encircled with immortal crowns, which their triumphant *Leader*, whom they followed with such undaunted fortitude, hath bestowed upon them; who, though they partake no longer of the bread that perisheth, nor are feasted with earthly viands, are yet *eating of the hidden manna;* who have received the *white stone*, in token of their *absolution;* and while the *names* and memory of many of them have sunk into oblivion, and the honours attending others are of little consequence, they are known in the heavenly regions by a *new name*, conferred as a mark of favour and distinction by the *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords.* We are drawing on, if we are true Christians, to the completion of that blessed hope. And that we may not be disappointed, may we by Divine grace, be preserved from the artifices of those who call themselves the *people of God*, while they are indeed of the *synagogue of Satan*, and from whatever, like *the doctrine of Balaam*, would ensnare our consciences, and defile our souls.

SECT. iv.

Ver. 10, 11, 14, 25, 19

SECT. V.

The epistles, which Christ charges St. John to write to the churches of Thyatira and Sardis. Rev. II. 18, *to the end.* Rev. III. 1—6.

Rev. II. 18. AND unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;
19 I know thy works and charity, and service,

REVELATIONS II. 18.

SECT. v.

AND to the angel, or Christian minister, *of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes* bright, and penetrating, *as a flame of fire, and his feet* shining *like fine brass: I know* and approve *thy works* of piety, which are many, *and* which, I am well apprised, are the effects of ardent *love* to me; *and* I am acquainted with the *service*

Rev. II. 18, 19

SECT. V.

Rev. II. 19.

vice thou art performing for my cause *and* interest, and with thy *faith and thy patience; and* that, with respect to *thy works, the last* [*are*] *more*, greater, and better, *than the first.* Very far art thou from that declining state of religion, of which I have had reason elsewhere to

20 complain. *Nevertheless, I have a few things against thee;* and particularly, *that thou permittest that woman Jezabel*[a], (for she deserves no better name, than of that infamous and idolatrous harlot,) *who* audaciously and falsely *says, that she is a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants*, in order to avoid persecution, *to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to*

21 *idols*[b]. *And* she is the more inexcusable, as *I have given her* sufficient *time to repent of her fornication, and she repented not;* but continued her enormities with increasing aggravation.

22 But *behold*, at length *I will* execute judgment upon her. And let the process of my righteous vengeance be observed: I am just preparing to *cast her into a bed; and* will bring *those who commit fornication with her*, who suffer their consciences to be debauched by such licentious and detestable principles, *into great tribulation, unless they* speedily *repent of their* wicked *works.*

23 *And I will slay her children*, those that presume to follow her in her wickedness, *with* sudden and inevitable *death; and all the churches shall know*, that though I am very long-suffering with respect to many sinners, and am unwilling immediately to come to extremities; yet I am not to be mocked and trifled with; that my eyes are indeed as observant as they are bright and piercing, and *that I am he who searcheth the*

vice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts;

a *That woman Jezabel.*] When the description of the followers of Jezabel, in this verse, is compared with what was before said of the Nicolaitans, (verse 14, 15,) the resemblance appears so great, that I am induced to believe it is the same heresy which is represented under both these views; namely, the *doctrine* of those who taught it was lawful to dissemble our religious principles, and occasionally to conform to *superstition* and *idolatry*, in order to avoid persecution. And as Jezabel was so infamous an *idolatress*, and so great a mistress of seducing arts, there was an evident propriety in such a representation, 1 Kings xvi. 31; xxi. 25. Some have fancied this was some *female* heretic. Dr. *Scott* thinks it to have been Helena, the harlot of Simon Magus, the great ringleader of the unclean sect of the Gnostics. (See *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. I p. 231.) Whether these words refer to any *woman*, who was in the plot, or only mean to describe a *person* of such seducing and dishonest practices, I cannot determine, though I rather incline to the latter. Compare verse 15, *note* g.

b *Commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols.*] Perhaps both of these might be the same; as it is well known *idolatry* is in many places in the Old Testament, and in several passages in this book, represented as *adultery* and *fornication.*

hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have *already*, hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even

the reins and the hearts [c]; *and I will* at length approve the justice of my proceedings with respect to this society, as well as all others, and will *give to every one of you according to your works*, and according to those principles from which I know they have proceeded, *But I* 24 *say to you* who are faithful, *even to the rest* of those that are *in Thyatira, as many as do not hold this* pernicious *doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they* proverbially *speak*, nor make themselves the instruments of accomplishing the designs of this infernal policy. *I will lay upon you no other burden* [d], will not severely reprove you for that mixture of human infirmity, which is to be discerned every where. *Nevertheless, what you have* received, as of Divine revelation and command, *hold fast till I* 25 *come*, and let nothing prevail upon you to make a sacrifice of your regard for me and my cause, for neither my ability, nor inclination, to reward those who are faithful, will ever be diminished. *And as for him that conquers, and* 26 *keeps my works unto the end*, notwithstanding the vigorous efforts of the enemies of my gospel, to wrest it from him, or induce him to deny it, though he should be ever so much exposed and overborne now, *I will*, at length, *give him* complete *power* and victory *over* all *the nations* that have combined against my people [e]. *And* 27 I will raise him to the dignity and glory of sharing with me in my final triumph; and *he shall rule them with a rod of iron*, and *they shall be* at once *dashed in pieces* with it, *like a potter's vessels*: in like manner, *as I have also received* the

SECT. V.

Rev. II. 23.

c *I am he who searcheth—the hearts.*] This manner of speaking is much more remarkable, than if it had only been said, that *I search the heart*: which remark answers the train of Mr. Emlyn's reasoning against the argument brought from *this text*, to prove Christ's proper *Deity*.

d *No other burden.*] Lord *Barrington* imagines this refers to the *gospel-decree* addressed to *Gentile proselytes*, now abolished with the Jewish polity. As if it had been said, Though *things strangled*, and *blood*, were formerly forbidden, as well as *idolatry* and *fornication*, yet I will not subject you to this injunction. *Bar. Ess.* iv. p. 20.

e *Power over the nations.*] This *power over the nations, of breaking them to pieces like a potter's vessels*, &c cannot, I think, be understood, of *temporal* dominion: for as the promise is made to every conqueror, and many Christians fell by the oppressive power of the enemy, and would, considering their present circumstances, be degraded rather than exalted, if raised to the possession of any earthly dominion and triumph, it appears to be much more properly explained of that *final* triumph of Christ over his enemies in the *last* day, when he shall *crush* them all to utter and irrecoverable ruin, and all his saints raised from the dead, and clothed with robes of glory, *shall sit down with him on his throne*, and constitute that illustrious body, which in, and with their exalted *head*, shall subdue every opposing power.

SECT. V.

the promise *of my Father* in that ancient oracle, (Psal. ii. 9,) the accomplishment of which all my faithful subjects shall see; for they shall behold all their enemies, however numerous and mighty, laid prostrate at their feet in the dust, and covered with everlasting confusion. *And I will give him*, even every one who approveth his fidelity to me, such lustre and glory, that he shall shine in my presence like *the morning star*, when its sprightly and cheerful beams break through the shades of night, and proclaim the approaching sun. *He*, therefore, *that hath an ear, let him* attentively *hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*; for all the churches are concerned in the message I send to each; and the importance of the contents make them worthy of universal regard.

Rev. II. 27.

28

29

even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.

Rev. III. 1. *And to the angel*, or minister, *of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he, that hath the seven Spirits of God*; he who presides over, and orders the dispensations of the Spirit, with respect to his various gifts and graces, and produces thereby such wonderful events as shall astonish all future ages; *and* that hath in his hand *the seven stars*, which represent the ministers of the churches, all whose motions he continues to govern and direct, according to his all-wise and gracious pleasure: *I know thy works*; that thou dost not answer that character which thou generally maintainest in neighbouring churches, for religion and piety. I know, *that thou hast a name that thou livest*; thou makest a splendid profession, and many of thy brethren are deceived by thy apparent zeal; *but* thou *art* indeed *dead*; there is little real religion lying at thy heart, nor do the uniform fruits of it prevail in thy life and conversation. *Be watchful*, therefore, that the whole may not be lost; *and strengthen the things which remain*, and *which are ready to die; for I have not found thy works filled up in the sight of God*, with that care and fidelity with which they ought to have been discharged; and he, therefore, cannot behold thee with the same approbation and delight, as he does more active, more diligent, and more resolute Christians. And this thy declension in religion is the more aggravated, as thou hast had so many advantages for improvement. *Remember therefore, how thou hast received, and heard*; for though thou mayest forget these advantages,

2

3

CHAP. III. 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold

hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

vantages, they are all distinctly in my view; *and* let it therefore be thy care to *hold fast* what yet remains; *and* to *repent* of that negligence by which thou hast lost so many opportunities: *therefore, unless thou art watchful,* I do now solemnly warn thee, that *I will come upon thee* by some alarming and awful interposition of my Providence, on a sudden, *as a thief,* on those that are buried in sleep; *and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come upon thee;* and the surprise will throw thee into the greatest consternation and distress. But I will do thee the honour, and the justice, to say, that *thou hast a few names,* and people, *even in Sardis,* corrupt and indolent as the general state of it is, *who have not polluted their garments* with the abominations by which so many have contracted gross defilements. *And,* as they have been distinguished by their fidelity and their zeal, I will distinguish them by my special favour, and raise them, ere long, to those seats of complete purity and glory, where *they shall walk with me in white*[f] robes, and attend my joyful and triumphant train; *for they are worthy* of such distinguished honour, as they have been especially careful to keep themselves from those evils which have been generally prevailing around them. *As for the conqueror, he shall be clothed in white raiment;* every victor shall wear the habit of festivity and triumph; *and I will not blot out his name from the book of life*[g], *but,* as he is inrolled among my faithful people, he shall ever continue in their number; and when the

SECT. V.

Rev. III. 3.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.

4

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before

5

[f] *Walk with me in white.*] It is well known, that *white robes* were worn on occasions of great *joy,* and sometimes in *triumphant* processions; to both which here is, probably, a *reference,* as indeed it seems that *triumph* and *feasting* would naturally go together. *Priests* also were clothed in *white,* and the addition of that dignity may also be implied, as certainly coming within the scheme of Christ with regard to his people. (Compare Rev. i. 6.) Some think here is an allusion to the custom of the *Sanhedrim,* when they examined the candidates for the *high-priesthood;* if they judged him worthy, they gave him a *white garment;* if unqualified, he was sent out from among them in *mourning. L'Enfant Introd.* p. 86. See *Ainsworth's Pref. to Gen.*

[g] *I will not blot out his name, &c.*] I think this plainly implies, that *some names* shall be *blotted out from the book of life;* and consequently, as nothing can occasion an alteration in the *decrees* of God, I think it proves, that *the book of life* does not signify the catalogue of those whom God has *absolutely proposed* to save; but rather the catalogue of those who were to be considered as *heirs of the kingdom of heaven* in consequence of their Christian profession, till by apostacy from it they throw themselves out of that society to which they before belonged; and it seems to intimate, that though the imperfection even of these *conquerors* might, in strict justice, have *deserved* it, yet Christ would spare them, and suffer them to continue in the number of those who should finally be found registered, as *free* of the heavenly city; and who, in the great day, should be called up to *posses* it.

SECT. V.

the register shall be read over in the presence of God in the great day, *I will confess his name before my Father, and before* the full assembly of *his* glorious *angels*, and not be ashamed to acknowledge him as my friend and my favourite.

Rev. III. 5.

before my Father, and before his angels.

6 *He that hath an ear* to hear, *let him hear what the Spirit saith to* all *the churches;* and let every one that hears, be animated by so glorious a hope, to exert his utmost efforts in this holy and honourable warfare.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 18 23 LET the disciples of *Christ* always remember, that *his eye* penetrates the most hidden recesses; that he *searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins* of the children of men: accordingly, let them take heed to cherish nothing, even *in their hearts*, which their great Master will behold with displeasure. There may *faith, and* 19 *patience and charity*, erect their throne; and may their dominion so prevail, that our *last works*, like those of the *church of Thyatira*, may be *more than the first.* And surely it is most reasonable, as we approach the end of our course, as we experience more of the vanity of life, and the substantial and solid pleasures of religion, that they should be so. But, alas! how much more common is the character of the *church of Sardis*, and of those who have only *a name to live, while they are dead?* Censorious and uncharitable as too great a part of the world is, are there not some who are ashamed and humbled in the view of the *esteem* which they are held in by their brethren, while conscious of so many inward, though unallowed, infirmities, of so much deadness and coldness in religion, even where they would be most zealous and lively? *Alas!* how far are *our works* from being *filled up before God!* Let us often lament these our imperfections and declensions; let us deeply humble ourselves before God on account of them; and let us be as *vigilant* as possible, that we *may strengthen those things*, which if they do indeed *remain*, seem *ready to die.* The more general the prevalence of such an indolent temper is, the more let us emulate the distinguished honour of those *few names in Sardis*, which had 4 not *defiled their garments;* that we may *walk with them;* and with *Christ, in white raiment:* that we may arrive at that happy state of everlasting *purity*, of everlasting *festivity*, of everlasting *triumph*, which our Divine Master has encouraged us to expect. We know not how *unexpectedly* he may come upon us: let us be 3 *always ready*, always strenuous in maintaining a holy *war* against the enemies of our salvation; and then we shall *conquer*, we shall triumph;

Chap. iii. 1, 2.

triumph; our *name* shall remain *in the book of life;* it shall be *confessed by Christ before his Father and his holy angels:* we shall share with him in his *triumph* over all the rebellious *nations*, in that day, when he *shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel:* we shall for ever wear the lustre of the *morning star;* yea, we shall *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. Amen.* SECT. V. Chap. II. 26. 27 28

SECT. VI.

The epistles, which Christ orders to be written to the two remaining churches, the Philadelphian and Laodicean. Rev. III. 7—22.

Rev. III. 7.

AND to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Revelation III. 7.

AND now *to the angel*, or minister, *of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith the Holy One*, and *the true One*[a] *he, who* claims perfect holiness, and invariable truth, as necessary and essential to his nature, in a manner which no creature can pretend to; he whose authority in the church of God is so uncontroulable, that it may truly be said, he *has the key* of the house *of David; he, who openeth, and no man shutteth*[b], *and shutteth, and no man openeth;* insomuch that Eliakim, who is spoken of in such terms of honour, (Isa. xxii. 22,) was only a type of him: SECT. VI. Rev. III. 7.

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

8 *I* well *know thy works*, how exemplary they are; and *behold*, I have used the power of the key which is in my hand, in such a manner, that *I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it:* I give thee a power and opportunity of spreading my gospel, which none shall take from thee; *because thou hast*, at least, *a little strength; and* thou *hast* used it well, and hast courageously *kept my word, and hast not denied my name*, though many attempts have been made to drive thee to do it.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of

9 *Behold, I will give*, as it were, into thy power, *those* hypocritical wretches, [*who are*] indeed *of the synagogue of Satan*, and under all the

a *The holy One, the true One.*] This is so peculiarly the *prerogative* of God, that I have sometimes wondered, no greater stress should have been laid upon it in proof of the Deity of our blessed Redeemer, by many writers who have pressed other *texts*, of a much more dubious nature, to serve in the cause. (Compare chap. vi. 10.)

b *Who openeth, and no man shutteth.*] The office of *lord-steward of the household*, who hath the power of *opening* and *shutting* what apartments in the palace he pleaseth, is described by these terms.

c *Worship*

SECT. VI.

the solemn guise of religious worship, are carrying on his cause and interest; *they say they are Jews*, and pretend to be my people, *and are not; but lie. Behold*, I say, I will give them into thy power; and *I will make them to come and worship before thy feet*[c]; *and they shall know that I have loved thee*, finding I have evidently supported thy cause and interest against all that have opposed it. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience*, that gospel, which I have myself, by such patient suffering in my human nature, established in the world, and by which I at once exercise and support the faith and patience of my people; *I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try* all *the inhabitants* of these parts *of the earth:* my hand shall remarkably appear, in sheltering thee from the dangers, by which others fall, and in strengthening thee in proportion to the trial. *Behold, I come quickly*, to put an end to those exercises which are for the present so painful; *keep that which thou hast* with resolute fidelity; *that no man take thy crown* from thee, even that crown of everlasting glory, which will be the gracious reward of thy continued fidelity. *As for the conqueror, I will make him a pillar* of distinguished ornament and beauty; and I will not only fix him near, but *in the temple of my God* above, *and* he shall stand there upon an unshaken and everlasting basis, so that *he shall go out no more, and* he shall bear the marks of immortal honour; for *I will inscribe upon him the name of my God*, under whose auspicious influence the grand victory has been gained, and under whose protection this sacred monument

Rev. III. 9.

of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the

[c] *Worship before thy feet.*] Were we more particularly acquainted with the *history* of these *seven churches*, in the times immediately succeeding the *date* of these *epistles*, we might perhaps find many remarkable illustrations of several passages in them, and of *this* among the rest: supposing, for instance, persons of considerable rank and dignity in Philadelphia, were converted to Christianity; and the interest of the *synagogue* here spoken of, was so weakened, or the heathen populace of the place so prejudiced against them, as that the chief *members* of the *synagogue* should find it necessary to court the protection of the Christians for the security of their persons or effects; it will throw considerable light upon the place. The like observation may be applied to the following clause: *I will keep thee from the hour of temptation*, &c. Dr. *Smith* has observed, (in his learned and accurate account of these parts, p. 134—141,) that the city of Philadelphia was the *last* of all the *seven*, here spoken of, which fell into the hands of the Turks; for whereas the rest were subdued by Urchan and Amurath: Philadelphia held out till the time of Bajazet. So that the remains of this society were preserved, when those of the rest were ruined But how far that *event* might immediately be referred to in the words before us, I cannot certainly say.

the name of the city of my God, *which is* New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and *I will write upon him* my new name.

monument of it shall for ever remain. *And* I will also inscribe *the name of the city of my God*, even *the New Jsrusalem*, as it is that to which he belongs, and of which he is free; even that New Jerusalem, *which is come down from heaven from my God*, and shall soon be represented to thee, O John, in a most glorious vision; *and* he shall bear *my new name*, the name which I have acquired by that great expedition, which brought me into the world, and carried me through so many labours and sufferings; even that of the Redeemer of sinners; under which character I will own him for one of my redeemed, who fought under my banner, and overcame his enemies by my influence, and my blood [d]. *He that hath an ear, let him* attentively *hear what the Spirit saith to the churches*; for addresses of this kind are made not to a particular person, or to one Christian society alone, but are indeed of more extensive, and even universal concern.

SECT. vi.

Rev. III. 12.

13 He that hath an bar, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

13

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

And to the angel of the church, which is *in Laodicea, write, These things saith* he, who is *the AMEN, the faithful and true Witness*; attesting those truths, which are of the utmost importance, on the most perfect knowledge of them, and with most unerring exactness; yea, he who is *the beginning of the creation of God* [e], by whom it was produced, and who is the Head and governor of all that he has made: *I know thy works*, and all the particulars of thy conduct; *that thou art neither cold nor hot*, that thou art growing very indifferent in religion, though thou canst not allow thyself entirely to cast

14

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would

15

d *I will make him a pillar*, &c.] Few *texts* in the whole New Testatment are more illustrated by *antiquity* than this. Great numbers of *inscriptions* are yet remaining, brought from the Grecian cities of Europe and Asia, and some from islands in the neighbourhood of Patmos, in which the *victories* of eminent persons are commemorated. And as some of these were placed near the *temples* of their deities, others were *in those temples*, to signify their being put under the particular protection of those deities; whose *names* therefore were *inscribed* upon them, and the *names* of the *conquerors*, and of the *cities* to which they belonged; as also the *names* of the generals, by whose conduct the victory was gained. As all these circumstances suit such kind of *martial victories*, much more than those obtained in the Olympic games, so celebrated in antiquity, and so largely and elegantly described by Mr. West in his late *dissertation* on that subject, I think this *text* seems to justify the turn I have generally given in my *paraphrase* to those weighty *passages*, on which so much of our strength and comfort as Christians depends.

e *The beginning of the creation of God.*] Mr. Fleming would render it, *the efficient cause of God's creation.* But as it is certain, that αρχη has not always that signification, I judge it safe to give what is more commonly the sense of it.

f *So*

SECT. VI.

cast it off; now this is so disagreeable to me, that *I wish* thou wouldst determine one way or another; and that it might be said, *thou wert* either *cold or hot*[f]; if thou really thinkest it not worth thy regard, reject it entirely; but if indeed thou art convinced of its truth and importance, act with a steady conformity to that conviction. *Therefore, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot*, this indifference of thine is as disagreeable to me, as liquor, in this condition, is to the stomach; and therefore to pursue the similitude, odious as it may seem, I must tell thee, that if thou persistest in such a disposition, *I will cast thee out of my mouth* with loathing. *Because thou sayest I am wealthy, and have enriched myself* by my own wisdom and virtue, *and have need of nothing*; imagining thy state in religion to be so very prosperous and happy; *and* in this spiritual lunacy into which thou art fallen, like a miserable beggar who fancies himself a prince, *knowest not that thou art wretched, and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked*[g], in a most deplorable condition, destitute of every desirable blessing; *I counsel thee*, that with an humble sense of thy condition, so extremely unhappy, thou apply to him who alone is capable of helping thee. And as I require no price, or equivalent for my treasures, but only a conviction of such an incapacity to make an adequate return for them, I advise thee, in that way, *to buy of me* a full supply for all thy necessities; blessings, as desirable as *gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest* indeed *be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and* that *the shame of thy nakedness may not appear.* Apply to me for an interest in my righteousness and sanctifying grace; that thou mayest be absolved before God, and adorned with every virtue which can render thee lovely in his sight. And

Rev. III. 15.

16

17

18

would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth:

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine

f So disagreeable to me, that I *wish* thou wouldst determine one way or another.] Mr. Lowman observes, that the clause, *I would thou wert cold or hot*, may be understood as expressing great dislike, not as a proper wish, or expression of what men really desire.

g *Wretched and pitiable*, &c.] The sad account which is here given of the *Laodicean church*, which is placed *last*, when compared with what is said of the glorious state of Christianity in the *last ages* of the world, may, I think, convince any *attentive reader*, that these *epistles* are not to be understood in a *prophetic* sense, as expressive of the state and character of the *Christian church* in different *periods* of time, it may also be observed, that at that rate the *middle* ages of the church, which were in fact most *corrupt*, must have answered to Pergamos and Thyatira, which are described in these *epistles*, as in the most flourishing and happy state.

thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

And whereas thou art blinded with such unhappy self-conceit, come, *and anoint thy eyes with* my sovereign *eye-salve, that thou mayest see*; for I can bring thee to right sentiments of thyself, and of thy state; and can teach thee to judge of objects according to their real worth. In the mean time, imagine not, that what may seem severe in this address, proceeds from any unkindness to thee: for *whomsoever I love, I reprove and correct.* Instead, *therefore*, of ungratefully quarrelling at so kind an admonition, set thyself immediately and diligently to improve it: *be* more *zealous* for the future, than thou hast ever been in time past, *and* deeply *repent* of thy prevailing indolence and degeneracy. *Behold*, I have stood for a long time, and *I* still *stand at the door, and knock*; waiting for admittance into your hearts. *If any man hear my voice*, with a due regard, *and open the door*; if he welcome me with affection due to such a friend, and such a Saviour, how mean soever his circumstances in life may be, and how faulty soever his character may formerly have been, *I will enter into his house*, and like some princely guest, will bring my own rich *and* delightful entertainment along with me; I *will sup with him, and he* shall sup *with me*; I will treat him with the most endearing and familiar friendship, accept the tokens of his affection, and give him the most solid evidences of mine. Let this variety of motives then engage you, O ye Laodiceans, to shake off that dull lethargic temper which has so long given me cause of complaint; and for your further encouragement, hear the last promise which I make, to all who exert themselves in that holy warfare, to which I am calling you, with becoming vigour and resolution: *as for the* valiant *conqueror, I will give him to sit down with me upon my* glorious and exalted *throne* in the heavenly world; *as I also* myself *have conquered* the enemies which violently assaulted me in the days of my flesh, *and am set down with my father upon his throne*; my faithful servants shall partake with me of this honour in the great day of my appearing, and shall live and reign with me for ever. *He* therefore, *that hath an ear* to hear, *let him* be all attention on this occasion, and *hear what the Spirit saith to the churches*; regarding what has been

SECT. VI.

Rev. III. 18.

19

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SECT. VI. been addressed to each, as intended to afford matter of general instruction.

IMPROVEMENT.

In what age, or in what place, will the *church* be entirely free from this *Laodicean* temper, which is so justly complained of by *our Lord*, and represented as so *loathsome* to him; I mean, an Ver. *indolence* in religion, often joined with arrogance and spiritual 15 pride too, as if great attainments were made, where it is almost matter of doubt, whether the very *essentials* be remaining! Let 16, 17 us not indulge to a vain *conceit* of our own *wisdom*, and *riches*, and *sufficiency;* but let us thankfully hearken to that kind invi- 18 tation, which he here gives us, to come and *purchase that* of him, *without money, and without price*, by which we may be *truly* and substantially enriched; *that* by which we may attain to real knowledge and true discernment; and may be *clothed* with ornaments and glories, which shall render us amiable in the eyes 20 of God. How long has our *compassionate Saviour* been waiting upon us! How long has he *stood knocking at the door!* And O, for what guests hath he been excluded! who have filled our hearts and taken the throne in them, while the entrance has been denied to the *Lord of glory and of grace!* Let us humble ourselves in the dust before him, and entreat that he would *now enter* as into his own habitation; that he would do us the honour *to sup with us;* that he would cause us to *sup with him;* opening to us the stores of his love and bounty, and causing our souls to rejoice in his salvation. "Awaken us, *O blessed Jesus*, to give thee a 17 most cheerful *admittance;* and rather show thy love to us by *chas-* *tisements* and *rebuke*, than suffer us entirely to forfeit it, by conti- 7 nued insensibility and negligence. *Holy and true, who hast the key of David*, exert thy power, irresistible in heaven and on earth, in *opening* our hearts: and O, *set before us* an *open door* of ser- 8 vice; and give us to use it to the utmost, for thy glory. Strengthen us to *keep the word of thy patience*, and make us unshaken in our attachment to thee, in every *hour of temptation, which may come upon the earth*, that *none may take away our crown.*"

11 Whatever our trials may be, let us rejoice in this, that they will be only for a short duration; for our Lord is *coming quickly:* whatever our combat may be, let us arm ourselves with *faith* in those glorious promises, which our Lord makes to them that persevere and *overcome.*

12 Have we not experienced the pleasure of filling a place in the *house of God* on earth? But this sacred satisfaction, and the holy season

season which affords it, is quickly over: let us long for the blessed time, when we shall be fixed as *immoveable pillars* in the temple of God above. And O, we may now wear, engraven on our hearts, *the name of our God and of his heavenly city*, and the new name of our triumphant *Redeemer*, as a token for good, that we shall bear the inscription in *bright* and *everlasting* characters above. But even this most expressive promise was not equal to all the purposes of a Saviour's *love:* that nothing therefore, might be wanting to enkindle the most generous ambition, he has been pleased to speak *of our sitting down with him upon his throne, as he is sat down on his Father's throne.* And who then will ever scruple *to suffer* with him, when thus assured of *reigning* with him in everlasting glory! O, who would grudge to resign, not merely the accommodations of life, *but even an earthly throne*, in the hope of one so much more radiant, exalted, and permanent! *Fear not, little flock! it is your Father's*, and your Saviour's *good pleasure to give you the kingdom*, (Luke xii. 32,) and he animates you to pursue it with such compassionate earnestness, as if he could hardly enjoy *it himself*, unless it were communicated to *you.*

SECT. vi. Ver. 21

SECT. VII.

Another scene now opens on the apostle John: in which God is represented as enthorned in celestial glory, surrounded with the hieroglyphical representation of angels, and the glorified church. Rev. IV. 1. *to the end.*

Rev. IV. 1. AFTER this, I looked and behold, a door *was* opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me: which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

Revelation IV. 1.

AFTER these things, and after Jesus had dictated to me these seven epistles, *I saw, and behold*, it seemed as if *a door* were *opened in heaven*, near to which I was brought; so that I was able to look in, and see what passed, and was transacted there. *And the first voice which I heard* before, [*was*] as loud *as* the sound *of a trumpet;* and while *speaking to me*, it seemed to issue out from thence; *and it said, Come up hither; and* having given thee this charge relating to present things, *I will shew thee what shall be afterwards.* *And immediately I was in the Spirit*[a] *and* an extraordinary vision presented

SECT. vii. Rev. IV. 1.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and

2

a *I was in the spirit.*] This phrase signifies, to be under a *strong and supernatural* impulse, caused by the *miraculous* operation of the Spirit of God acting on the imagination in such a manner as to open extraordinary scenes, which had not any exact external *archetype*. And it is much illustrated by the view presented to Ezekiel, *when he sate in his house among the elders of the people*, (Ezek. viii. 1,) who probably saw nothing but the prophet himself, as one in a *trance, or extasy*, or whose

SECT. vii.

Rev. IV. 2.

sented itself to my intellectual view; for *behold*, and observe diligently a circumstances of so great importance; *a throne was set in heaven*, to represent that of the blessed God; *and* there was *one sitting upon it*, of a majestic form and appearance, and arrayed in robes of glory, suited 3 to the situation in which he was. *And he who sate* [*on it*] *was, in* the form and lustre of his *appearance, like a jasper and sardine stone* [b]; *and a rainbow*, in which the bright green, *in appearance like* the vivid, though soft and agreeable colour of *an emerald*, [*was*] especially prevalent, appeared *round about the throne*; expressive of that propitiousness and kindness, and of that covenant-relation to his people, which the blessed God is pleased to acknowledge in the midst of his transcendent glory. (Compare 4 Gen. ix. 16.) *And*, in an extensive circle, *round about the throne* of God [*there were*] *twenty four* other *thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty four elders* [c] *sitting*, as an emblem of the Old Testament-church, and also of the New; and they were *clothed* in a habit somewhat resembling that of the Levites, or Priests, *with white raiment: and* in token of their royal dignity, *they had upon their heads golden crowns.* 5 *And out of the throne there came* flashes of vivid *lightnings and thunders, and* sometimes articulate *voices; and seven lamps of fire* [*were*] *burning continually* [d] *before the throne; which are the seven*

and behold, a throne was set in heaven; and *one* sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine stone; and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices; and *there were* seven lamps

whose thoughts were so attentively fixed, as to be insensible of what passed around him. We are not therefore to imagine, that the person *sitting on the throne*, or the four *animals*, or the *four and twenty elders*, were real beings existing in nature; though they represented, *in a figurative manner*, things that did really exist. And though it is possible, that *aerial* scenes might, by Divine or angelic power, have been formed, I think it much more probable, that all that passed was purely in the *imagination* of St. John. This will keep us, in our interpretation, clear of a thousand difficulties, not to say absurdities, which would follow from a contrary supposition; namely, that there is in heaven an *animal* in the form of a lamb, to represent Christ; and that there are such *living creatures* as are here described; and that God himself appears in a *human* form, &c. And this observation I make once for all, desiring that it may be remembered, and applied as occasions present.

b *Like Jasper*, &c.] I do not suppose this refers so much to the *colour* of these stones, as to their *lustre*, and the radiancy of the light as reflected from them, when perfectly polished. The *rainbow of emerald* was, no doubt, to express *a covenant of peace*; of which the *rainbow* was, with Noah, an appointed token. And that lively and cheering colour seems to have been particularly mentioned, not to imply there were no other, but that the proportion of *green* was greater than ordinary. Compare Ezek. i. 26.

c *Twenty-four elders*] The number seems to allude to that of the *patriarchs* and *apostles*; and they are called *Elders*, as the presidency of *elders* was common among the Jews. And these might be considered as representatives of the *church*, paying homage at the *throne* in the name of the rest.

d *Seven lamps of fire*, &c.] Some think these are the *seven Spirits of God*; that is, *angels* spoken of afterwards, chap. v. 6: but

lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne *were* four beasts full of eyes, before and behind.

7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast

seven spirits of God; that is, they represent a great variety of the Spirit's operations, and those of good angels who act in subserviency to him. *And before the throne* [*there was*] correspondent to the brazen sea in Solomon's temple, (1 Kings vii. 23,) *a* great laver, or *sea*, which was made all *of* pure pellucid *glass*, which was clear *like crystal* itself. *And in the middle of* the space between *the throne and the circle about the throne* [*there were*] *four living creatures* [e]; and to signify their intelligence, and quickness of observance, they appeared *full of eyes*, both *before and behind.* These four animals, of a very extraordinary form, seem to have been intended as hieroglyphical representations of the angelic nature [f]: *and* the head of *the first animal*, in this marvellous composition, [*was*] *like a lion*, to signify the courage and vigour with which these celestial beings execute the commands

SECT. vii.

Rev. IV. 5.

6

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but I at present doubt, whether they may not be distinguished, *Lamps of fire*, or or lambent flames, like those that fell upon the *apostles* on the day of pentecost, (Acts ii. 3.) might perhaps be *emblems* of the blessed *Spirit* of God in its various and powerful operations; especially those by which the minds of intelligent created beings are illuminated and purified. And *the Spirits standing before the throne*, might be distinct appearances of *angelic forms*; as it is certain some of them were, from the actions they afterwards performed: *sounding the seven trumpets, &c.*

e *Four living creatures.*] It was a most unhappy mistake in our translators, to render the word ζῶα, *beasts*; it certainly signifies any other kind of *animals*, that is of creatures which have *animal life*, as well as *beasts.* The word *beast* not only degrades the signification, but the animals here mentioned, have parts and appearances, which beasts have not, and are represented as in the highest sense *rational.*

f Hieroglyphical representations, &c.] It is well known, the ancients (borrowing them I suppose from the Egyptians,) dealt much in *hieroglyphics*, by which natural and moral truths were expressed. *Dr. Middleton*, in his curious collection of *antiquities*, presents us with one so remarkable, that I cannot forbear mentioning it here. It is a copy of a *gem*, in which a *man's* face, an *elephant's* head, a *peacock*, and a *sceptre*, are joined together. He thinks it was intended as an *hieroglyphic*, or emblematical representation of Socrates: as the face bears a strong resemblance to the pictures usually given of him. He supposes the *human face* to represent that of Socrates, and the other figures, those beautiful and Divine images which were in his mind. The *peacock*, being the most beautiful bird, may denote the beauty of his virtues; the *sceptre*, his majesty and authority; the *elephant*, the strength and fortitude of his mind. And for the same reason he observes, it might be used to express the character of a *philosopher* in general; but especially, the *stoic's wise man*, who was furnished with all kinds of virtues and perfections, being the only beautiful and valiant man, and a king, whatever his circumstances might happen to be. *Middleton's Antiq. Tab.* xxi. § 10, p. 243—245. There can, I think, be no doubt, but these are the *cherubim* described by Ezekiel, chap. i. which therefore should be carefully compared with this representation. To consider this appearance as an emblem of *deity*, which is the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson and his followers, appears to me a very great absurdity. Nor can I think, with Mr. Jackson, that they are merely intended to signify the homage paid to God by all *terrestrial* creatures. Another peculiar and extraordinary hypothesis, with regard to them, has been proposed to me, and may perhaps be laid before the world; and therefore I think it most respectful *to the reverend and ingenious author*, not to anticipate his own design. Some have thought these animals represent spirits of an order *superior to angels*, taken up wholly in contemplation. See *Reynolds of angels*, p. 6.

g *Holy,*

SECT. VII.

Rev. IV. 7.

mands of God, and the irresistible strength with which they encounter and vanquish all opposition. *And* the head of *the second animal* [*was*] *like a calf*, or young bullock, to signify the firmness, patience, and perseverance with which they go through the labours which God has appointed them. *And the third animal had a face like a man*, to express, by the image of the only rational creature on this earth, the clearness of intelligence, and the strength of reason, with which, in a vastly superior degree, they are endowed. *And the fourth animal was like a* swift *flying eagle*, with its wings displayed, and with quickness in its eye and motion, to signify the sprightliness and activity, and incomparable velocity, with which these celestial spirits fly from world to world, to execute the commands
8 they receive from their Sovereign. *And* though *the* heads of these *four* wonderful *living creatures* were different, yet they had in the rest of their body, one form; and they *had each of them six wings round about;* so that their body seemed covered with the rich plumage of them. *And within* [*they were*] all *full of eyes*, to signify their quick discernment of every object around them. *And they rest not day nor night;* but they stand in the Divine presence, *saying* with united voices, (as the seraphim, represented in the vision which Isaiah saw, Isa. vi. 2, 3,) "*Holy, holy, holy; Lord God Almighty* [g] *who wast, and art, and art to come;*" thus giving to God, in continual acts of adoration, the glory of his natural and moral perfections, and acknowledging their immutability from everlasting
9 and to everlasting. *And while the living creatures are* thus *giving glory and honour, and thanks to him that sits upon the throne*, and addressing their sublime and harmonious anthems of praise to him, *who liveth for ever and ever*, with unwea-
10 ried vigour and activity of mind, *The four and twenty elders*, whom I described before as themselves sitting on majestic thrones, *fall down* in the Divine presence, even *before him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and they cast down their crowns before the throne*, in token of their homage to that transcendently glorious being, from whose sovereign

beast *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and *they were* full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour, and thanks, to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever.

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

[g] *Holy, holy, holy, &c.*] This anthem is that which Isaiah tells us he heard the *seraphim* sing, and it is observable, that many other *hymns* recorded in this book, are borrowed from the Old Testament.

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

reign grace and unparalled munificence they received them; *saying*, at the same time, *Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive* the ascription of *glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast*, by thine almighty energy, *created all things, and for thy* sovereign *will, they are and were created*; their first production, and continued existence, is owing to the riches of thy free goodness; and therefore, they are all under the strictest obligations, according to their respective natures, to subserve the purposes of thy glory.

SECT. VII.

Rev. IV. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

And should not *we* likewise *fall down* with the *angels* and *glorified spirits*, and pay *some* homage to the Sovereign Majesty of heaven, though it be impossible for us to equal *theirs?* For ever adored be the Divine grace, that *a door is opened in heaven*; in consequence of which, even before we enter, we are allowed to *look in*; and thus to confirm our *faith*, and to animate our *devotion*; which, alas! after all, is too ready to decline and languish. That it may be greatly invigorated, let us look up to the *throne, and to him that sitteth thereupon*; and rejoice to see that *peaceful* emblem with which the seat of his glory is surrounded, the *rainbow* of vivid and pleasant green: signifying, that the majestic Being who fills it, is the *covenant-God* of all his believing and obedient people, and that *mercy* and *love* reign triumphant, in the whole constitution of that perpetual covenant. Ver. 1 2, 3

Let us contemplate with veneration the *blessed angels, the ministers of God, who do his pleasure*, represented here under *hieroglyphical* characters, as possessed of amazing *strength* and *courage*, *resolution* and *patience*, of the sublimest *reason*, and the most deep and penetrating *sagacity*, active and pure as *flames of fire*; and with these lofty ideas in our minds, let us ardently pray that *the will of God may be so done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* Let us also remember *the elders* here mentioned, the representatives of the church of the Redeemed, seated on glorious *thrones*, *clothed in* that *white raiment*, which is *the righteousness of the saints*, and adorned with *crowns of glory.* And let us especially consider, how the angels and the saints are *employed*: they *rest not day nor night* from breathing out the most ardent devotions; they feel nothing of that weariness and languor with which we are too frequently invaded in this state of mortality, even in our best moments, and divinest frames; but they cry continually, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art* 6, 7 4 3

SECT. VII.

art to come; they give *glory, and honour, and thanksgiving to him that sitteth on the throne.* And infinitely worthy he is to receive it; He who is the *Almighty* Creator, He who is the ever-present, and ever-gracious *Supporter* of all! *Thou art worthy, O Lord, thou alone art worthy;* and though thou *withholdest from us the face of thy throne,* while we dwell in these *tabernacles of clay,* yet as we are thy *creatures,* thy *rational creatures,* we partake of thy protection and bounty; and feeble as our faculties are, and dark as the world is in which we dwell, we are able to discover thee as our Almighty *Creator,* our constant *Preserver,* our never-failing *Benefactor.* And as such, may we *daily* worship and adore thee, with our feeble voices in this state of mortality; that when we are duly prepared, we may begin a nobler song, and join in the sublimer anthems and hallelujahs above. Amen.

Ver. 11

SECT. VIII.

The vision of the sealed Book, and of the Lamb that was slain, who was found worthy to open it, and on that account received the acclamation of the whole choir of angels and saints. Rev. V. 1—14.

Revelation V. 1.

SECT. VIII.

AND, having observed the particulars mentioned above, *I saw in the right hand of him who sate on the* glorious *throne* already described, the volume of *a book,* or scrole, *written* on both sides, *within and without*[a]; for though I saw only the outside, perceiving it inscribed with characters, I naturally concluded the inside was full; and, as it was rolled up, it was *sealed with seven* strong *seals,* each of which belonged to a distinct leaf. *And I saw a mighty angel,* who wore, in his appearance, the evident marks of dignity and power, *proclaiming with a great voice,* and saying, *Who is worthy to open the* mysterious *book* which is in the hand of God, *and to loose its seals,* and so to disclose its

Rev. V. 1.

2

Rev. V. 1.
AND I saw in the right-hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back-side, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

a Written on both sides, *within and without.*] Mr. Lowman, after Grotius, hath observed, that there ought to be a stop after the word, *within,* (ἔσωθεν,) and that it should be rendered, *written within, and sealed on the back-side.* But the learned Dr. Hammond hath very well defended the sense given in the paraphrase; observing, that it appears in the process, that the opening of every single seal brings forth some new representation; which could not be the case, if all the seals were on the back-side; for then they must all be opened, before any part of the book could be discovered, &c. And therefore it must be concluded, that each seal belonged to a distinct leaf.

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain,

its wonderful contents? *And* upon this I saw an universal blank confusion upon every countenance; so that it plainly appeared, that *no one*, among all the creatures of God, *in heaven, or upon earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it:* And, as I had an earnest desire to know the contents, *and* had pleased myself with a secret expectation that some extraordinary discovery was to be made to me, and to the church, from thence, it grieved me exceedingly, insomuch that *I wept abundantly, because no one was found worthy to open and read the book; nor* indeed, so much as *to look into it.* *And* as the grand act of adoration, in which the elders had joined with the living creatures, to him that sat on the throne, was over, *one of the elders said to me, Weep not, behold, the Lion, who is of the tribe of Judah,* (that excellent Person to whom that oracle relating to Judah, in which he was described under the token of a lion, to represent his invincible strength, by which he shall triumph over all his enemies, (Gen. xlix. 9, 10,) principally referred;) he hath conquered this great difficulty: He, who is *the Root*, that was to spring from the stock *of David*, when it seemed to be withered in the earth, *hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose its seven seals;* so that thou shalt soon hear its contents; for he is appointed by God to penetrate and discover those secret decrees, which are concealed from every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. *And I beheld, and lo,* to my great astonishment, *in the middle space between the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders*, who made a kind of semicircle about them, *there stood* this illustrious Person, whose title I had just been hearing; and, though he was spoken of by the name of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to express the terrors of his wrath against his implacable enemies, the symbol of his Person, in this mysterious vision, was very different; for he appeared as *a Lamb, who had been slain* for sacrifice, and wore the recent marks of slaughter, in the blood on his throat and breast; and this Lamb was of a very uncommon form, *having seven horns and seven eyes,* instead of two of each; and this I understood as a mysterious representation of extraordinary power and knowledge, and of the wonderful degree in which the Spirit of God

SECT. viii.

Rev. v. 3. 4 5 6

SECT. viii.

Rev. V. 6.

was poured out upon the Person whom this visionary Lamb represented; for *these are the seven Spirits of God*[b], *sent forth into all the earth;* they represent that Divine energy, which operates every where; and of exerting which, the most illustrious angels have often the honour to be the ministers. *And he came* near to the seat of Majesty, *and took the book out of the right-hand of him who sate upon the throne;* which I understood as a symbol, to intimate that the Lord Jesus Christ, whom I knew to be represented by this slaughtered Lamb, was appointed to reveal the secret decrees of God, and to give me those discoveries which I so much desired to receive. *And when he received the Book* in the manner I have described, *the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders, fell down before the Lamb,* in token of humble reverence and adoration, and these elders appeared as a choir of humble worshippers in the temple of God, *having every one harps* of gold, with which they played in sweet harmony, to aid the music of their voices; *and* they had also *golden vials*, or censers[c], *full of perfumes, which are the prayers of the saints;* for, as I understood these elders to be the representatives of the church, I apprehended that, in allusion to the incense offered in the temple while the people were praying, this circumstance had a reference to prayer, and was intended to shew how acceptable it is to God, when it proceeds from an holy and an upright heart. *And they sang a new song*, excellent in its kind, and composed on a much greater occasion, and in much sublimer strains of Divine harmony, than those which the priests and Levites sang in the temple at Jerusalem; *saying, Worthy art thou to*

slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right-hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book,

b *Seven spirits of God.*] Comparing this text with chap. viii. 2. I must acknowledge, that this is indeed to be understood of *seven angels.* Mr. Mede infers from hence, that there are, in fact, *seven archangels*, who preside over all the rest. But I cannot allow the consequence to be certain. We sometimes read of *four spirits*, sent forth as these are said to be. (Zech. vi. 5;) and, I think, the whole it amounts to, is, that there are *many* celestial spirits, who are the instruments of that providence which Christ exercises over the earth, who bring to him an account of what passes, and receive and execute his commands. But, by the way, this will no more prove, that he is under a *necessity* of receiving intelligence from them, or of using their assistance, than the *parallel passage* of Zechariah will prove it of *God the Father*, Zech. iv. 2, 10. But Dr. Scott very justly argues, that as they are called *the seven eyes of the Lord* in that *text*, and here of the *Lamb*, it is an argument for the exaltation of the *Man Christ Jesus*, above the highest *angel* in heaven.

c *Vials*, or censers.] These, (as Mr. Lowman observes,) were not small bottles, such as are now called *vials;* but cups on a plate, like a tea-cup and saucer, in allusion to the *censers* of gold in which the priests offered incense in the temple.

d *Of*

book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

to take the book from the hand of God, *and to open the seals thereof; for thou* O blessed Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, thou *wast slain* to expiate our guilt, *and* thou *hast redeemed us to God by thy* precious *blood*, from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law, and the wrath of a justly incensed Deity; whose servants and favourites we are now become, in consequence of thy kind and gracious interposition. And we are now assembled round his throne, *out of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation*, near and afar off, sacred and profane, learned and barbarous; wherever we were dispersed, thou hast found us, and into whatever bondage and misery we were sunk, thy power and thy mercy have rescued us; *And* thou *hast made us to our God, kings and priests;* we are robed in purity and majesty, we are crowned with gold; and here we appear in these priestly offices, which we perform with the splendour of princes; *and we shall reign on earth:* the Christian cause shall prevail through all ages; while the happy souls who have passed courageously through their trials upon earth, come hither in their appointed seasons, and share the honours of thy triumphant kingdom. *And I beheld* this glorious scene with inexpressible pleasure; *and* while my soul was all attention, I also *heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and of the living creatures*[d], which betokened in general the angelic nature, *and of the elders* which represented the church. *And* a multitude appeared joining the choir, so exceeding great, that *the number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands;* I was ready to apprehend that neither thousands nor millions were sufficient to express them. And there was not so much as a jarring voice, or a cold and languid heart in the whole assembly; but with united ardour and harmony, they were *saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered, to receive power* over universal nature, *and* all the *riches* it can boast. Worthy is he, to whom we should ascribe consummate *and*

SECT. VIII.

Rev. V. 9.

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

10

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

11

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain,

12

d *Of many angels, and of the living creatures.*] This plainly shews that there was an appearance of angels, as well as of these *animals* which represented their natures; a circumstance which I do not remember in the vision of Ezekiel.

e *In*

SECT. viii.

Rev. V. 12. *and* unsearchable *wisdom*, *and* resistless *might*, *and* peerless *honour*, *and* resplendant *glory*, *and* immortal *blessing*; even he, who once appeared under a cloud of weakness and poverty, and under the imputation of folly, loaded with dishonour and infamy, with reproaches and curses: worthy is he, of all the dignity and glory, the benediction and homage of the heavenly world, throughout the endless ages of

13 eternity! *And* while the multitude of the heavenly hosts were singing this sublime anthem, *every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, even all things that are in them*, in every various form of nature, seemed to echo back the voice; and *I heard* them *saying*, *To him who sits upon the throne, and to* his Son *the Lamb*, the worthy Partaker of his throne and kingdom, [*be*] perpetual *blessing*, *and* the profoundest *honour*, *and* consummate *glory and* almighty

14 *strength*, ascribed *for ever and ever*. *And the four living creatures said*, *Amen*, to this hymn, to testify their hearty concurrence; *and* at the same time, *the twenty-four elders fell down* before the throne, *and worshipped him who liveth for ever and ever*; acknowledging him to be infinitely superior to all those services which the most exalted powers of created nature are capable of rendering.

slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 It should fill us with unutterable joy, when we lift up our eyes to the *throne of God*, that we there discern the *Lamb* wearing the marks of *slaughter*. We should then gratefully remember his dying love; for it is his precious *blood which cleanses us from all sin*, and emboldens our addresses to God, conscious as we are, that our guilt is attended with great aggravations. Surely, had it been queried, with respect to the great *atonement* to be made for our transgressions, as it was with respect to *the opening these seals*,

e *In the sea.*] As the inhabitants of the *watery* elements are necessarily *mute*, I suppose we are not to understand by this, that they seemed to grow *vocal* in the praises of Christ upon this occasion; but rather, that *heaven*, *earth* and *sea*, is used to signify, that *all nature*, in its different ways, concurred in the praise; that is, that the whole constitution of it contributed to furnish out matter of praise; just as inanimate, as well as rational creatures, are called upon to praise God in several of the psalms *especially*, especially Psal. clxviii.

a *The*

seals, Who is worthy to complete this gracious undertaking? we should have seen with unspeakable anguish, that *none in heaven, or on earth,* would have been found equal to the task. But here likewise, *the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.* How divinely is he furnished for the high station he sustains, and for all the glorious services assigned to him! What amazing *power,* what adorable *wisdom* is implied in the *seven horns,* and *seven eyes,* with which he is here delineated? and O! what love, in submitting to be *slain, that he might redeem us to God by his blood!* With the *prayers of* the *saints,* which come up before God as *incense,* may they ever mingle their most ardent *praises* for this Divine condescension. And out of gratitude to their Redeemer, let them rejoice to see the glorious change in his condition, from his humiliation and sufferings on earth, to his exaltation and reward in heaven: and let them ardently long for the happy season, when the *full choir* of the redeemed, *from every nation, and people, and tongue,* shall unite in this joyful acclamation, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing.*—In this world the disciples of *Christ* are only a *little flock,* but when they stand together upon the heavenly mountain, they shall appear *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;* and all the harmony of their voices, and all the ardour of their souls, inconceivably improved as all their powers will be, shall be united on this happy occasion. Form us, *O Lord,* we intreat thee, for this Divine employment, and teach us, in some measure, to anticipate its pleasure, in these regions below. Even now, in spirit and intention, we prostrate ourselves before thee, and lay down the *crowns,* which *faith,* as it were, hath already received, at *thy feet;* giving *glory* to him *who sitteth upon the throne,* and celebrating the victories and honours of the *Lamb.*

SECT. viii. 3, 4 5 6 9 11

SECT. IX.

An account of the opening of the six first seals, and of the awful events which accompanied the opening of each. Rev. VI. *throughout*[a].

Rev. VI. 1.

AND I saw, when the Lamb opened one

REVELATION VI. 1.

I COULD not but be all attention to this wonderful scene; *and I saw when the Lamb opened one*

SECT. ix. Rev. VI. 1.

a The vision of the *seals.*] I am vastly more obliged to that ingenious and excellent commentator, Mr. Lowman, for what I understand of this book, than to any other writer whatsoever. And, as I think his celebrated and valuable scheme of

sect. ix. *one of the* seven *seals* of the book, which he had taken out of the right-hand of him that sat
Rev. VI. 1. upon the throne; *and I heard one of the four living creatures, which said, as with a voice of thunder, Come, and see* the wonders which are now
2 presenting themselves. *And I saw, and behold a white horse* appeared; *and he who sat thereon had a bow* in his hand, and a quiver of arrows hanging at his back; *and* to express his royal dignity as the King both of the church and of the world, *there was given to him a crown* of gold, *and he went forth conquering, and to conquer:* I understood that he was to gain signal victories, and that the series of them was immediately to begin. (Compare Psal. xlv. 3; Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 11 [b].)
3 *And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature*[c], *saying*, as the former had done when the first was opened, *Come*
4 *and see. And another horse came out*[d], [*which*] seemed

one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come, and see.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see.

4 And there went out

of interpretation the most satisfactory, and which indeed throws considerable light upon the series of prophecy, I shall present my readers with a short view of his plan, under the several visions; referring the more curious to the commentary itself. But I would first observe, with regard to this celebrated performance, that there is, in many particulars, a beautiful resemblance between the *prophetic* representations, and the *events* supposed to be correspondent to them; and that the historical facts are represented with great learning and judgment; yet the correspondence between the prophecies and the events is not in *all* respects, so clear and evident, as might have been expected; nor can we always say, why the events in question are represented by one of the *emblems* used, rather than by another. However, he has finely illustrated many passages, especially by similar phrases from the *prophetic* books of the Old Testament, in which he is quite unequalled; and hath made out so much, particularly with respect to the *first*, and beginning of the *third period*, as evidently proves this book to be a glorious confirmation of Christianity, and worthy our most attentive and diligent examination.—This learned and accurate writer, then, divides the *prophetic* parts of this book into *seven periods*. The *first* represented by the *seals*, shews the state of the church under the *heathen Roman Emperors*, from A. D. 95, to A. D. 323. II. *Period*, of the *trumpets*, in its state from Constantine, A. D. 337, to A. D. 750. III. *Period*, of the *vials*, its state in the times of the last head of Roman government, represented by the *beast*, for 1260 years, from about the year 756, to A. D. 2016. IV. *Period*, the *millennium*, from A. D. 2000, to A. D. 3005. V. *Period*, Satan, loosed for a little season, and then destroyed. VI. *Period*, the resurrection and final judgment. VII. *Period*, the heavenly state.

b *First seal*, &c.] This refers to the *triumph of Christianity* over Jewish and heathen opposition by the labours of its first preachers.

c *The second living creature.*] As each of these *living creatures* is represented as speaking *successively*, I think it confirms what was advanced in *sect.* vii. *note* f, relating to the scheme of Mr. Hutchinson, who supposes the *four living creatures*, taken *together*, to be an emblem of the Deity.

d *Another horse came out.*] Mr. Lowman thinks, that the leaves of the book were so adjusted, that on opening the *first seal*, the first leaf unfolded; and on it there was *drawn*, in a vivid and beautiful picture, a *man* mounted on a *white horse*; and that what is described on opening those that follow, is an account of the *various pictures* which John saw delineated on the several leaves. But as we have an account, not only of the appearance of these things, but of their *motion*, and their *voice*; and especially, of a change in the state of several of them, particularly of the *souls under the altar*, (ver. 9,) I

con

out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.

seemed to betoken some great slaughter and desolation to be made by approaching wars; for he [*was*] *red; and it was given to him who sat upon it, to take peace from the earth; and that they should slay each other. And*, as a further token of this, *there was given to him a great sword* or faulchion, in his hand, by which he might make terrible devastation.

SECT. ix.

Rev. VI. 4.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, as the two former had done, *Come and see. And I saw, and behold*, there appeared *a black horse*, which might betoken an approaching famine, by the emblematical *and* memorable circumstances which attended his entrance on the scene; for *he that sat upon him, had a pair of scales in his hand*, to imply that men should eat their bread by weight, and drink their water by measure. 5

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

And I heard a great *voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, A measure of wheat*, which shall only be daily food for one man, shall now be sold *for a* denarius, or Roman *penny* which is the price of his daily labour; *and three measures of barley* only shall be sold *for a* denarius, or Roman *penny* [e]. And *yet*, that there may not be a total scarcity, *see that thou* who appearest as the executioner of this judgment, *injure not the oil, nor the wine* [f], let the olive- 6

conclude, that the scene did not lie in the *leaf* of the book, but arose in *vision* as the rest; and that the events described, seemed successively to pass before the eyes of John. And indeed, I think it apparent that the state of the vision he at first saw, was something altered, upon the opening of some of the *seals*, especially *the seventh*. —The ingenious *author* above mentioned, interprets *this seal*, of the judgments of God upon the *Jewish persecutors*, under Trajan and Hadrian, A. D. 100, to A. D. 138, when the Jews had 1000 cities and fortresses taken and destroyed, and 580,000 men slain.

e *A measure of wheat for a penny.*] This may seem, to an English reader, a description of great plenty; but, it certainly intends the contrary, as I have intimated in the *paraphrase*. The *penny* was *about seven pence halfpenny* of our money; and it appears from Tacitus, as well as from Mat. xx. 2, (*See Fam. Expos. in loc.*) to have been the daily *wages of a labourer*. It also appears from other *ancient writers*, particularly Herodotus, (see *Raphelius in loc.*) and from Hippocrates, Diogenes, Laertius, and Athenæus, (see *Grotius in loc.*) that this *measure*, or *chœnix*, was no more than was allowed to a slave for his *daily* food. What would become of families, when a man could gain by his labour no more, and that only of bread, than might suffice for his own subsistence?—Mr. Lowman interprets this third seal of the scarcity, in the time of the Antonines, from A. D. 138, to A. D. 193, and produces passages from Tertullian, and the Roman historians, concerning the calamity the empire endured by scarcity in this period.

f *See that thou injure not*, &c.] The introduction of so many *allegorical* persons, as *famine*, and *death*, and the state of separate spirits in this vision, confirms what was said above, in note d, as to the nature of the things that appeared.

g *Fourth*

SECT. IX.

olive-trees, and the vines, remain unblasted, to shew, that God in judgment remembers mercy.

Rev. VI. 7. *And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying* to me, *Come, and see* a further discovery of the Divine will. *And I saw and behold a pale horse* 8 appeared; *and as for him that sat on him, his name was* called *Death.* He appeared like a person entirely emaciated, *and hell followed him:* he seemed to be attended with a person, who was a proper emblematical representation of the state of separate spirits; *and there was given unto him power to slay* a great number, as it were, *the fourth part of the earth, with the sword, and with famine, and with* pestilence, that most dreadful kind of *death; and with the wild beasts of the field* [g].

9 *And when he opened the fifth seal,* a very memorable scene represented itself to me; for then *I saw under the altar,* which made a part of the view before me, a visible representation of *the souls of those who were slaughtered on account of the word of God, and the testimony* to the truth of the gospel *which they courageously retained,* 10 in the midst of all opposition. *And they cried, with a loud voice,* as making an appeal to the injured justice of the Divine Being; *and said, How long, O* thou supreme and sovereign *Lord* of the universe, who art ever armed with almighty power and terror against all thine implacable enemies: how long, O thou *holy and true* God, shall it be, *ere thou dost judge and avenge our blood upon those who dwell upon the earth* [h]; who have, without remorse, poured it 11 out as water. And, upon this, they appeared to be called up from the place where they lay as so many bleeding victims; *and there were given unto each of them white robes* [i], in token of the

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast, say, Come, and see.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

10 And they cried, with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that

g *Fourth seal*] Mr. Lowman interprets this of the seal of the pestilence, and other calamities, in the reigns of Maximin and Valerian, from A. D. 193, to A. D. 270. This he supports by proper authorities from several Christian and heathen writers in that period, who particularly mention one pestilence, that lasted fifteen years.

h *Ere thou dost avenge our blood*] We are not to understand this as the language of personal *revenge,* but of *zeal* for the honour of God, which was so intimately concerned in the punishment to be inflicted upon those *blood-thirsty* persecutors.

i *White robes*] *Mr. Fleming* understands this, as an intimation of their preferment to some *new* post of honour and service. But, I suppose, this was only a representation, that though their *blood* did cry for vengeance in the ears of God, yet that vengeance should be *delayed;* nevertheless, that, in the mean time, they should be *exalted* to a glorious state. The argument he draws from this passage, in proof of

that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

the triumph they had gained over death, and all its terrors; *and it was said to them, that they should rest yet a little while*, though their blood remained unavenged, *till the number of their fellow servants, and brethren, who should be killed, as they* [*had been*] for the testimony of a good conscience, and the defence of the gospel, *should be fulfilled*[k], according to the intention of Divine Providence, in letting their persecutors go on a while, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity [l].

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and 12 *behold there was* immediately *a great earthquake: and* not earth alone, but heaven, was affected with great consternation; for *the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became* red *as blood: And* it seemed as if *the stars fell from heaven upon the earth:* numbers of

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind:

them at once, as fast *as* when a *fig-tree drop-* 13 *peth its untimely figs, being shaken by* the force of *a mighty wind. And the heavens passed away*, the clouds rolling one upon another, *like a volume* of a book *when it is rolled up; and every mountain* on earth, *and* every *island* in the sea,

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

were moved out of their places; so great and ge- 14 neral was the shock, to represent the calamities approaching in those terrible wars, which were to precede the revolutions to which this seal referred [m]. *And* all the inhabitants of the 15

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;

world were thrown into an universal terror; so that *the kings of the earth, and the grandees* about their courts, *and the rich men and the chief officers* of armies, who commanded their thousands, *and the powerful men*, who bore the greatest sway in the public counsels, or were armed with the most warlike prowess; *and every slave, and every free-man*, fled as in surprise, and *hid themselves* as fast as they could, even *in the*

a first resurrection, seems too precarious to be repeated. *Flem. First. Res.* p. 46, 47.

k *The number of their brethren who should be killed, &c.*] Nothing could tend more to encourage Christians to endure their sufferings with steady *patience*, than this that it was appointed of God, that a certain number of *martyrs* should be put to death, and that the season of their *triumph* was to succeed.

l *Fifth seal.*] Mr. Lowman interprets this seal, of the severe *persecution* under Dioclesian, from A. D. 270, to A. D. 304; which was the most extensive and furious of all; and so many Christians suffered death, that the *heathens* boasted, in an ancient inscription that they had effaced the name and superstition of the Christians.

m *Earthquake,——sun becoming black,——stars falling, &c.*] Awful judgments and calamities are often described by such commotions and alterations in the *natural* world. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7; Joel ii. 10; and the like.

n *Day*

SECT. IX.

the most gloomy *caves, and* among the *rocks of the mountains*, horrid as this retreat appeared.

Rev. VI. 16. *And* not thinking themselves sufficiently secure there, *they said*, in wild astonishment and affright, *to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne*, the almighty and terri-

17 ble God, *and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come*; and mild and gentle as he once appeared, we find it insupportably dreadful; *and who can be able to stand* against it? Thus it appeared that they would have thought the crush of a mountain less terrible, than the vengeance they expected; and had more hope of moving inanimate nature by their outcries, than of prevailing upon their righteous and inexorable Judge[n].

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand.

IMPROVEMENT.

To whatever event these *seals* may refer, it is certain, that the representations here made, are very awful, and very instructive. Let us consider ourselves as invited to *come up and see*, and let

Ver. us observe the memorable spectacle with attention. Let the

1 view of the *white horse, and his rider* who went forth *conquering*

2 *and to conquer*, lead us to reflect on the peaceful purposes of our blessed Saviour's appearance, and the rapidity of his conquests; and engage us frequently to pray for the further prosperity of his *kingdom*, that kingdom of righteousness, love and happiness.

3, 4, 5 When we think of the terrible effects of *war*, of *famine*, and of *pestilence*, represented by the *three following horses*, and their *riders* here mentioned, let it excite our thankfulness, that not one of this dreadful *triumvirate* is sent forth against us, though our national crimes have indeed deserved, that they should invade us with

n *Day of his wrath is come.*] As it appears, by comparing one part of this book with another, that the last *seal* made way for, and introduced the *trumpets*; and the last *trumpet*, the *vials*: it is justly argued, that there is a reference to a series of events, successively following each other; and consequently, this passage cannot refer, to the *final judgment*, but to some great and spreading *calamity*, in which the hand of Christ should appear. And this interpretation is illustrated and confirmed, by the manner in which the destruction of Jerusalem is foretold. Mat. xxiv. Compare Isa. ii. 19; xiii. 6. Hos. x. 8; Zeph. i. 14; Luke xxiii. 30.—Mr. Lowman interprets the 6th *seal*, of the great commotions in the empire, from Maximinian to Constantine the Great, who put an end to the persecution of heathen Rome; from A. D. 304, to A. D. 323, during which time, there were many bloody battles between the contending emperors, till Constantine abolished *paganism*, and established the christian religion. This interpretation he confirms by apposite passages from Lactantius, and the heathen historians; and it appears the most probable.

with united terrors; that peace should be taken from our land, SECT. ix.
that our *bread* and *water* should be received by *weight* and *measure*, and that the dead should lie unburied in our streets, the Ver.
food of the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth: nor can
any thing more justly excite our gratitude and thankfulness, than
that the terrors and the guilt of *sanguinary persecution*, are not to
be found in the midst of us. The history of its horrors and rava- 9
ges in other nations and ages, may sometimes be an exercise of
our *faith*; and we may be ready to cry out with *the souls under the altar, How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not avenge the blood of thy saints upon the earth?* But let us wait with patience; let us not form a hasty and inconsiderate judgment. The
dead, who *die in the Lord*, and those who had been persecuted to
death for his sake, and in his cause, are incomparably more *happy*
than those who are the happiest among the living. The *white* 11
robes, and golden crowns, with which they are adorned, are an
abundant compensation, not only for every *lighter* suffering, but
even for the slow *fire*, and the *rack*, those most dreadful instruments of torture. And though their malicious and implacable
enemies may bitterly insult over them *for a while*, yet *the tri-* 26
umphing of the wicked is for a short time, their guilty spirits will
soon be summoned before the great *Avenger of blood*; and the
day is coming when they shall be publicly brought forth, to suffer
the utmost demands of his justice; even that day, when all the
figurative descriptions here used shall be fully answered, in their
literal meaning; *when the sun shall* indeed *be turned into dark-*
ness, and the moon into blood; when the volume of heaven shall be 13, 14
rolled up as a scroll, and its stars shall fall from their orbs. It is
no wonder, that ungodly sinners fly from this alarming and tremendous scene, with wild consternation and confusion; no wonder, that they rend the very heavens with their cries, and *call*
upon the mountains to fall upon them, and the rocks to cover them: 15, 16
for O! what were the sudden and irresistible crush of a *rock*, or 17
a *mountain*, when compared with the weight of the *wrath of the*
Lamb, and with the *fire and brimstone of the second death.* O!
that by the expectation of this awful day, men of *all ranks* and
conditions, may be influenced to make their application to him,
while he yet appears in the displays of his grace and mercy; to
kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, even
when his wrath is only beginning to be kindled. (Psalm ii. 12.)

SECT.

SECT. X.

The increase of the Christian church, which was to succeed the opening of the seals, is represented by the vision of twelve thousand sealed out of each tribe of Israel; and then follows a view of the glory and happiness of those who should courageously endure persecution while it continued. Rev. VII. *throughout.*

REVELATION VII. 1.

SECT. X.

Rev. VII. 1.

AND after these things, it pleased God to give me a representation of the increase which his church should receive, after the commotions which had been shadowed out by those visions which were introduced by the opening the seals. Accordingly, *I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth;* that is, the north, the south, the east, and the west; and they appeared as *holding the four* cardinal *winds of the earth* in their hands, *that the wind might not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree;* but that there might be the most entire and complete calm, to represent the peaceful state of things, which should succeed the tumultuous and distressing revolutions which had been intimated to me above. (Compare Jer. xlix. 36, 37.) *And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun*, to intimate the progress the gospel should make from the east to the west; *having* in his hand *the seal of the living God*, in order to impress a mark upon those whom he was graciously determined to distinguish as his own property, and who should be inclined to dedicate themselves to his service. *And he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom power was given* over the winds, at present to restrain them, but afterwards to loose them with great violence, and by them *to injure*, in a terrible manner, *the earth, and the sea; Saying, Injure not*, by the missive vengeance committed to you, *the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads;* that distinguishing them by that seal, you may know how to moderate the force of the storm, where their safety and comfort is concerned. *And I* then *heard the number of those that were sealed*, in all, *one hundred*

REV. VII. 1.

AND after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea;

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed; *and there were*

SECT. X.

Rev. VII. 5.

were sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

hundred and forty-four thousand, who were sealed in an equal number, *out of every tribe of the children of Israel.* And I heard them mentioned in the following order; *of the tribe of Judah*[a], as the most noble and glorious, distinguished by its regal dignity, and its peculiar relation to Christ according to the flesh, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Reuben*, though that were so much degraded by Jacob, and comparatively so small, when the people were numbered in the wilderness, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand* too. *Of the tribe of Gad*, whose territories in Canaan lay contiguous to those of Reuben on the other side Jordan, [*were*] also *sealed twelve thousand.* And, from thence, the angel appeared to pass over to the north-west boundary of the land, and to the shore of the Mediterranean sea, which was the lot *of the tribe of Asher*, of which there [*were*] also *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the* neighbouring *tribe of Naphtali*, whose inheritance lay east of the former, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Manasseh*, whose land lay next to the east of Naphtali [*were*] *sealed* the same number, that is, *twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Simeon*, though it had its inheritance taken out of that of Judah, and so might seem less considerable, there [*were*] *sealed* as many as of the former, even *twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of* his brother *Levi*, though his posterity were scattered among the other tribes, and had no land that was properly their inheritance, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand* likewise. And *of the tribe of Issachar*, to which the angel then passed, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of Zebulun*, which lay contiguous to that of Issachar to the north, [*were*] also *sealed twelve thousand.* And *of the tribe of* Ephraim, the other son of *Joseph*, and by far

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the

[a] *Of the tribe of Judah*, &c.] I freely acknowledge, that it is very difficult to me to assign the reason of that *order* in which the *tribes* are placed, or the reason, why *one* of the tribes is omitted; the latter of which appears much more important than the former. However this is plain, that when Levi was mentioned for *one tribe*, it was necessary, that since *twelve* only were to be mentioned, *one* should be omitted. Some indeed have imagined, that Dan was omitted, to express how detestable idolatry is in the sight of God; as the tribe of Dan was the first that fell into idolatry after their settlement in Canaan. Compare Judges xviii. 30, 31. Dr. *Hammond* assigns another reason, namely, that long before that time, the tribe of Dan was destroyed, or brought very low, say the Jews; and indeed it is not numbered among the rest of the tribes, 1 Chron. ii. and following *chapters*. See *Ham. in loc.*

[b] *Multitude*

SECT. X.

far the most considerable of his descendants, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand* too, he not being in that respect at all distinguished from Manasseh his brother. And to conclude, *of the tribe of Benjamin*, Jacob's youngest son, [*were*] *sealed twelve thousand.* And thus upon the whole, the number of one hundred and forty-four thousand was completed. Nor did I presume to inquire why Dan was not introduced among his brethren, on this occasion. Thus did God represent to me, the extraordinary growth of the Christian Church, which seemed to be matter of inexpressible joy to the inhabitants of the heavenly world. For *after this, I saw, and beheld a great multitude*, who made a thronged assembly, *which no one could number*[b]: and appeared to have come *out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and language;* the blessed fruit of preaching the gospel over all the world; and they then appeared to me, as *standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in* long *white robes, and* having branches of *palms in their hands*, to signify the victory they should gain over all their enemies, and the state of holiness and joy to which they should be finally conducted, notwithstanding all the formidable opposition through which they should be called to pass. *And* I heard them *crying with a loud voice*, in token of the intenseness of their devotion, and *saying*, Let all the glory of this great *salvation* which we have obtained, be ascribed *to our God who sits upon the throne*, and from thence has graciously regarded us, and exalted us to such dignity and happiness, mean and miserable as we once were; *and* let it be also ascribed *to* the grace and blood of *the Lamb*, who gave himself to be slain for our redemption. *And all the angels stood round about the throne, and* encompassed also, at the same time, *the* twenty-four *elders, and the four living creatures, and,* in token of the humblest reverence,

Rev. VII. 8.

9

10

11

the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the

b *Multitude whom no one could number, &c.*] Some have supposed, that *the hundred and forty-four thousand* were Jews, and that these were the Gentile church. But it appears to me, that the *sealing these thousands*, expresses the progress of the gospel under Constantine; and that the *innumerable multitude* here spoken of, were the *spirits of good men departed* out of this world, and now with God in glory: and especially those who had weathered the difficulties and persecutions, during the first *centuries* of Christianity, when the civil power was generally active against it; and when, I think it highly probable, that many *persecutions* might have raged in various parts of the world, whose histories are not come down to us. And perhaps the *holding the winds*, which is mentioned ver. 1, may denote the peace in Constantine's time.

the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing and glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

reverence, *they fell down on their faces before the throne, and worshipped God. Saying,* SECT. X. Rev. VII. 12. *Amen:* thus let it be, let *the blessing, and the glory, and the wisdom, and the thanksgiving, and the honour, and the power, and the strength,* [*be*] ascribed *to our God for ever and ever, amen:* may all creatures for ever bless, and give thanks to him, as originally and essentially possessed of supreme glory, complete wisdom, of irresistible and almighty power, and therefore worthy of all honour, though exalted above all praise. We acknowledge him to be so, we rejoice that he is so, and wish that universal nature may join with us in so reasonable, and so delightful an homage, and pronounce the solemn amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes; and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

And one of the elders answered, 13 *saying to me, As for those who are clothed with white raiment,* and make such a splendid appearance, *who are they, and whence do they come? And I,* supposing by his question that 14 he asked in order to quicken my attention to what he had to tell me concerning them, *said to him, Sir,* I conclude *thou knowest,* though I do not. *And he said to me,* It is true; and I would have thee observe, for thine own encouragement, and that of thy brethren, and those who may arise after thee, that *these are they who are come out of much tribulation,* which they have endured in the cause of true religion; *and* they *have washed their robes, and made them* so *white* as you see them, *in the blood of the Lamb*[c]: they owe all their exaltation and glory, not to the blood they have themselves offered, but to that most precious blood of his, which he permitted to be shed for their sakes.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth

Therefore, being thus redeemed to God by him, 15 and having been enabled to approve their fidelity to their Divine Master, in the midst of the greatest extremities, they now receive a rich equivalent for all they have suffered; for *they are before the throne of God, and they perform Divine service*

c *Made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*] It looks too much like an obstinate resolution by no means to acknowledge the *efficacy of Christ's blood* to our salvation, for any to maintain, that the *blood of the Lamb* here signifies blood shed *for his sake,* when it is said in words so much resembling these, chap. i. 5, *who loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood.* And chap. v. 9, *thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* The texts produced to palliate the other forced and unnatural interpretation, when consulted, will appear little to the purpose. They are chiefly Col. i. 24, and Heb. xi. 26.

SECT. X.

service to him day and night in his temple; and he who sitteth upon the throne, pitches his tabernacle, as it were, *upon them*, and displays the tokens of his presence all around them *They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more*, for ever; *nor shall* the scorching rays of *the sun fall upon them, nor any* other inconvenient and disagreeable *heat; For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall* himself, as it were, own the relation of a Shepherd to them, and take care to *feed them, and he shall lead them to fountains of living water; and* that *God*, whom they have faithfully served, and whose interest has been so dear to them, *shall* act, as it were, the part of an indulgent Father, and tenderly *wipe away every tear from their eyes*; comforting them with the most reviving consolations, after all the calamities and distresses he has permitted them to endure below.

Rev. VII. 16.

17

sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 4—8 How inexpressly happy are *the thousands of those who are sealed*, those whom God has *marked* out for his own, and in that character, has taken them under his special protection. Whatever storms and tempests may arise, they are in no danger of being forsaken; they shall be preserved inviolably safe, and their happiness is secure. They shall be brought at length to join with the 9 *innumerable multitude, who surround the throne*, and ascribe, as all *Israel* must do, *salvation to God who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb.* And *O! that the salvation of Israel were come out of Sion*, that their praises might sound sweeter here on earth, and that myriads of new voices might unite in the harmonious concert. 12 Those songs of heaven let us begin below, and say, *Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and* 10 *power, and might, be to our God for ever and ever: amen!* If through his grace, we can call him *our God*, how cordially should we join in this sublime ascription!

14, 13 In the mean time, we may see the church *in affliction*; we may feel a *large* share of personal, or public *tribulation*; but, when it presses hardest upon us, let us lift up our eyes to that *glorious scene* which the *apostle* beheld, and which was so excellent and sublime, that it might well transport him, even under the *tribulations* through which he was then making his way to it. Let us persevere, steadily and faithfully, as they did; and the day will come,

come, when our *robes* shall be as *white*, and our *crowns* as *radiant*, and our *palms* as *verdant* as theirs. Let us then bear with patience, *hunger* and *thirst*, *heat* and weariness, while we travel through this vale of tears; *rejoicing in hope* of the everlasting refreshment and pleasure to which *the Lamb will lead us*; even those *fountains of living water*, of which he will give us to drink, when *God has wiped away all tears from our eyes*, and placed us *before his throne*, where we shall *serve him day and night in his temple*, and see his face, and dwell with him, and have him for ever *dwell with us*, and in us. *Amen.* SECT. X. 16 17 15

SECT. XI.

On the opening the seventh seal, the seven angels appear with their trumpets, and the four first of them sound. Rev. VIII. *throughout.*

Rev. VIII. 1. AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

Revelation VIII. 1.

THUS I have given an account of the manner in which the Lamb proceeded in opening six of the seals, and of the effects produced by them: *and* I am now to add, that *when he had opened the seventh seal, there was* a profound *silence in heaven*[a] *for about* the space of *half an hour*; to awaken, by that means, a more earnest attention to the extraordinary things that were to appear in consequence of the opening that seal. SECT. xi. Rev. VIII. 1.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

2 *And I saw the seven angels*[b] which I have before mentioned, and *which* then *stood before* the throne of *God, and seven trumpets were given to them*, that they might each of them successively sound an alarm; which I understood to be the symbol of some very important and awakening events, which were in order of time, to succeed those which had been expressed by the

a *Silence in heaven.*] Some are of opinion, here is an allusion to the *silence* which used sometimes to be kept in the worship of God in the *temple*, while the people were praying, Luke i. 10.—I think, with Mr. Lowman, that the *seventh* seal was only introductory to the *trumpets*, and the *seventh* trumpet to the *vials*.

b *The seven angels which stood*, &c. The manner in which this is expressed in the Greek, τους αγγελους—οι εστηκασι, is very *emphatical*. It seems to signify the *seven angels*, who had *before* been mentioned as *standing before the throne*; and this form of speaking so plainly refers to what had been said before, that it does a great deal towards proving, that *the seven Spirits of God*, mentioned chap. v. 6, as *the eyes and horns of the Lamb*, are the same with these *angels* mentioned in the *note* on Rev. iv. 5, though, as I have there intimated, it is not absolutely certain.

c *With*

SECT. XI.

Rev. VIII. 3. the seals. *And* while they were preparing to execute the orders they had received, *another angel*, whom I understood as a typical representation of the great High Priest of the church, *came and stood before the altar* which I saw in this celestial temple, *having a golden censer, and there was given to him much* fragrant *incense*, consisting of a variety of excellent perfumes mingled together, *that he might present* [*it*] *with the prayers of all the saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne*[c]; just as the Jewish high priest used to burn incense on the golden altar in the temple, while the people were praying in the courts of it, at the hour of
4 morning and evening sacrifice. *And the smoke of the perfumes went up* in a thick and odoriferous cloud, together *with the prayers of the saints, from the hand of the angel* as he stood *before God*; and seemed thereby emblematically to signify, how grateful to the Divine Being those prayers were, which proceeded from holy hearts, being recommended by the intercession of that great High Priest, whom this glorious angel had the honour, upon this occasion, to represent; as Aaron and his sons did in the Jew-
5 ish tabernacle of old. *And* when *the angel* had performed this office, in order to shew the awful manner in which God would avenge the injury which his praying people upon earth received from its tyrannical and oppressive powers, he *took the censer, and* advancing towards the brazen altar of burnt-offerings, he *filled it with fire*

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the

c *With the prayers of all the saints.*] Some have thought, that this is a plain intimation of the doctrine of the *intercession of the angels*, which is urged to have been an erroneous Jewish notion; and those who imagine it to be taught here, have made it an argument against the *inspiration* of this book. But I rather agree with those interpreters, who consider *this angel* as an emblem of Christ. If we were indeed to consider Christ as appearing in the shape of a *lamb*, this would be a difficulty; but it does not appear at all absurd to me, that while the *efficacy of Christ's atonement* was represented by a *lamb slain*, his *intercession*, consequent upon it, should be represented by *an angel offering the incense*; which seems only a *symbolical*, or *hieroglyphical* declaration of this truth, that the prayers of the saints on earth, are rendered acceptable to God by the intercession of one in heaven, who appears as a priest before God: just as the *vison of the lamb* represents to us, that a person of perfect innocence, and of a most gentle and amiable disposition, eminently adorned and enriched with the Spirit of God, has been offered as a sacrifice; and is, in consequence of that, highly honoured on the throne of God. But who this important Victim, and this Intercessor is, we are to learn elsewhere; and we do learn, that both these offices met in one, and that this illustrious Person is *Jesus the Son of God*.—As the *golden altar* made a part of the scene, there was a proprity in its appearing to be used, and the time of *praying* was the *hour of incense*. This *vision* may probably be designed to intimate, that considering the scenes of confusion represented by the trumpets, the *saints* should be exceeding earnest with God, to pour out a spirit of wisdom, piety, and zeal, upon the church, and preserve it safe amidst these confusions.

d *With*

the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightenings, and an earthquake.

fire of the altar[d] *and threw it upon the earth;* *and* as soon as ever this action was performed, *there were* long and terrible *voices and thunders*[e] *and lightenings*, which seemed to break out from the Shechinah, the glorious token of the Divine presence; *and* there was also the sudden and violent shock of *an earthquake*, which seemed to shake the foundation of the world; *And* SECT. xi Rev. VIII. 5.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound

6 *the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets,* stood out in order, and *prepared themselves, that they might sound*, as every one should receive the appointed signal; which hereupon was given to each in his order.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

7 *And the first angel sounded* his trumpet; *and there was* a violent storm of *hail and fire*, and the shower was also *mingled with blood*[f], *and it was cast down upon the earth*, greatly to the detriment of its productions; *and* particularly, it seemed to me, that *a third part of the trees were burnt up, and all the green grass* of the field *was* also *burnt* and scorched *up*. (Compare Exod. ix. 23.)

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain

8 *And the second angel sounded; and it was as if a great mountain burning with fire*[g], *was cast into the sea*; *and* it produced so great an alteration

d *With fire of the altar.*] There was no fire upon *the golden altar*, but that which was in the *censer*, in which the *incense was burnt*; so that we must necessarily, by this fire of the altar, understand that of the *brazen altar*, though it is not expressly declared to be so; and this may intimate, that in some other places the same words may, by comparing different circumstances, have different ideas annexed to them.

e *Voices and thunders.*] If the *latter* word be intended to explain the *former* it might be rendered, *voices, even thunders.* But if different ideas are to be annexed to the words, I must confess, that I know not what they are. Yet we may imagine some distinct articulate sounds different from *thunder*, to be mixed with it, like that which some of those present heard, John xii. 29. (Compare Isa. xxix. 6.) This representation may be intended to intimate, in general, the confusion and calamities, with which *the period*, expressed by the successive *trumpets*, should be filled, and the regard God would shew to his praying people during its continuance.

f *Hail and fire mingled with blood.*] Grotius explains this, of the hardness of heart, and bloody rage of the Jews; Mr. Mede, of the invasion of the northren nations upon the Romans; and Mr. Clark, of the Arian heresy and persecution, whereby many professors of Christianity were infected, and many destroyed. See his *Annotations in loc.* But Mr. Lowman, more probably, interprets it of the bloody wars in Constantine's family, which with the invasion of the neighbouring nations, almost ruined the whole strength of the Roman empire, fell heavy on its great men and particularly the family of Constantine, which during this period, was quite extinguished; from A. D. 337, to A. D. 379.

g *Mountain burning.*] Grotius explains this, of the soldiers' rapine upon the people of Jerusalem, and firing the towers; Mr. Mede, of the firing of Rome; Mr. Clark, of the spirit of ambition and pride among the clergy; Mr. Lowman, of the invasion of Italy by the northren nations and the taking of Rome by Alaric, general of the Goths, who plundered it and set it on fire, and this calamity was followed by the spoil of the greatest part of Italy, from A. D. 379, to A. D. 412.

h *There*

SECT. XI.

tion in the colour of the waters, that it seemed as if *a third part of the sea became blood*, which I easily apprehended to signify the slaughter which should come upon many people by means of some victorious Prince, and those who fought under his banner. *And*, as a further token of it, *a third part of the creatures which had* animal *life in the sea died, and a third part of the ships were destroyed* thereby, and the persons sailing in them all perished. (Compare Jer. li. 25.)

Rev. VIII. 8.

9

10 *And the third angel sounded; and* to represent some great destroyer that was to appear, and become very conspicuous, both for the mischief he should occasion, and the ruin in which he should be involved, *there fell from heaven a great star* [h], *burning like a torch; and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;* to signify the influence which the Person represented by it should have upon human affairs, and upon those things that were the springs of comfort and support to mankind. *And*, in reference to the effect it was to produce, *the name of the star is called Wormwood, and a third part of the waters became* impregnated with *wormwood;* but with this additional circumstance, that it was poisonous as well as distasteful; *and many men died* in consequence *of* drinking *the waters, because they were become bitter.* (Compare Exod. vii. 20, 21.)

11

12 *And the fourth angel sounded; and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that the third part of them,* even of their light, *was darkened* [i]; *and the day did not appear, with*

tain burning with fire was cast into the sea. and the third part of the sea became blood:

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood: and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the

h *There fell from heaven a great star.*] Compare Dan. viii. 10. Grotius interprets it of the *Egyptian impostor*, Acts xxi. 38. Mr. Mede, of the fall of the *western* empire under Augustulus; and Mr. *Clark*, (see his *Annot. in loc.*) of the corruption of ordinances by an *heretical* churchman, of great parts and considerable figure, whom he supposes to be Pelagius. Some explain it of Mahomet, whose name signifies *illustrious*. *Mem. of Literat.* Vol. V. p. 253. But Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, interprets it of the succeeding ravages in Italy, founding the Gothic kingdom there, and putting an end to the Roman empire; from A. D. 412, to A. D 493. Agreeable to this, historians inform us, that several provinces of the *empire* were dismembered, the city of Rome again taken, and plundered, and Italy became a prey to the barbarous nations.

i *Darkened.*] Compare Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Grotius interprets this of taking the *south Galilean* towns; Mr. Mede of the destruction of the light of Rome, when deprived of *regal and consular* majesty. And Mr. Clark, see his *Annot in loc.* of eclipsing *the light of the church*, by tradition and human inventions. Mr. Lowman

SECT. XI.

Rev. VIII. 12

the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

with respect to a third part of its lustre, *and the night also;* but there was as great a deficiency in the usual light of both, as when either the sun by day, or the moon by night, is so eclipsed, that a third part of the body of each is shaded; which I understood to imply, that God would, in the course of his Providence, draw a veil over the whole face of things, and obscure the glory of the state to which this vision referred.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!

And I beheld, and heard one of the angels flying in the midst of heaven, saying, with a loud voice, The things which have already happened, are terrible; but what is yet to come is much more so; *woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth, for the remaining sounds of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!* Prepare therefore for the manifestation of these awful scenes. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

WHILE we prepare ourselves, with silent admiration, to attend the discoveries here opened upon us, let us rejoice in the symbolical representation of the *intercession of Jesus*, our great High Priest, shadowed forth, in so beautiful and expressive a manner, *by the angel standing at the altar with the golden censer, and much incense.* Behold, how the *prayers of all the saints* ascend before God with acceptance! See the method we are to take, if we desire that ours should be acceptable to him; and, encouraged by such a view, let us offer them up, not only with humility, but with cheerful confidence, though we are conscious of their great unworthiness. Ver. 1 3 4

To what wretchedness are they exposed, who oppress and injure those, that through their great *Representative*, have such an interest in the court of heaven. The *hail and the fire*, shall, at the Divine command, powerfully plead their cause; the *mountains shall be torn from their basis*, and *cast into the midst of the sea;* the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *stars shall be darkened* in their orbs, and all nature be thrown into convulsive agonies, ere God will suffer them finally to be over-born, or fail to punish, with becoming 7 12

man interprets it of the wars in Italy, between the Goths and Justinian's generals, whereby the exarchate of Ravenna was erected, all remaining power and authority at Rome suppressed, and the imperial city became subject to Ravenna, where the *exarch* or lieutenant of the *eastern* empire resided; from A. D. 493, to A. D. 568.

a *Locusts*

SECT. XI. becoming severity, those who continue to persecute, or evil intreat them.

Let such awful representation as these, remind us of the sovereign almighty power of God, whom all the hosts of heaven worship with reverence ; and at whose awful word, when he gives forth his voice, *hailstones and coals of fire descend ;* (Psal. xviii. 13 ;) *at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble, and the foundations of the earth are shaken ; who speaks to the sun, and it shineth not ; who darkeneth the moon, and sealeth up the stars. Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations,* so terrible in the judgments which thou executest on the earth ? Deliver us, we intreat thee, from the multiplied and accumulated miseries of those who continue obstinately to oppose thee ; and conduct us at length to thy heavenly presence, though it should be through days of darkness, and waters of bitterness, and seas of blood. *Amen.*

SECT. XII.

The effect of the fifth and sixth angels sounding their trumpets, Rev. IX. *throughout.*

REVELATION IX. 1.

SECT. XII. *AND the fifth angel sounded ; and I saw* an angel of distinguished lustre, descending with such amazing velocity, that he seemed like *a* shooting *star*, compare Job xxxviii. 7. and when he was *fallen*, as it were, *from heaven to the earth, and* appeared standing upon it, *there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit :*

Rev. IX. 1.

2 And he went to the door of that infernal dungeon, *and he opened the bottomless pit, and a* thick *smoke ascended from the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and* it diffused itself all abroad ; so that *the sun, and* the whole body of *the air, were darkened by the smoke* and gloomy exhalations *of the pit ;* which I understood as intimating some terrible calamity approaching.

3 *And* I saw a very shocking appearance ; for *out of the smoke there came locusts upon the earth* [a] ; *and*

REV. IX. 1.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven : unto the earth : and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit : and there arose a smoke out of the pit ; as the smoke of a great furnace and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts

a *Locusts upon the earth.*] Many *protestant* writers imagine these *locusts* to signify the religious orders of monks and friars, &c. The learned Grotius understands by them, the sect of the zealots, which appeared among the Jews during the siege, and at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Mede, the inundation of the Saracens ; and indeed, with considerable circumstances of *resemblance*. The ingenious Mr. Lowman confirms this interpretation ; and shews, that the rise and progress of the Mahometan religion and empire, till checked by internal divisions, is a remarkable accomplishment of this part of the prophecy ; which is further

custs upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

and a destructive *power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power*, that they should be as pernicious to the inhabitants of the earth, as those terrible animals, and should injure men by their stings as well as by their teeth.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

4 *And* there was this farther remarkable circumstance, that whereas locusts bring along with them such general destruction to all vegetables, *it was said to them*, whom I saw on this occasion, *that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only*[b] some human creatures; and this, under a particular limitation to *the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads;* from whence I inferred that this destructive visitation should especially affect those, who whatever they might profess, were destitute of true vital religion.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.

5 *And* to signify the lingering vexation which these destroyers should occasion to the inhabitants of the country they were to ravage, I was further informed, that *it was given to them, that they should not kill them* outright, *but that they should be tormented five months;* which might be intended to express a calamity, that should endure about an hundred and fifty years. *And their torment*, that is, that which they occasioned by their attack, [*was*] extremely violent, *like that of a scorpion when it strikes a man.*

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

6 *And in these* dreadful *days*, to which this vision refers, *men shall seek death*, in a wild kind of despair[c], *and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee* away *from them*, and leave them to mourn over a life of wretchedness, all the comforts and enjoyments of which shall be utterly swallowed up in their sufferings.

And

ther illustrated, by the ignorance and error the Mahometans every where spread, their great number and hardiness, their habits, customs, and manner; *namely*, twisting their hair, wearing beards, their care of their horses, invading their neighbours in summer, like locusts, sparing the trees and fruits of the country they invaded, &c. The captivity of the men, and the miserable condition of the women, exposed to persons who gave an almost unbounded liberty to their lusts, which was enough to make them even to *desire death*, verse 6. All these circumstances are suitable to the character of the Arabians, the history of this period, and to the particulars of the prophecy.—The period extends from A. D. 568, to A. D. 675.

b *Only the men who had not.*] The use of the particles εἰ μη, here, is very remarkable; and it is apparently necessary it should be rendered *only*, rather than *except*.

c *Shall seek death*, &c.] As such great numbers were, in fact, slain by these *locusts*, (if they signify, as is generally supposed, the Saracens,) this expression must only be understood of *many* survivors, who, by the calamities they inflicted, should be made weary of their lives. See *note* a.

SECT. XII.

Rev. IX. 7.

And these creatures were not exactly of the form of locusts; but though they bore some resemblance to them in many instances, they differed from them in others, and were to be considered as a[d] kind of hieroglyphical representation of creatures which are very mischievous and terrible; and I particularly observed, that *the likeness of the locusts* [*was*] *like horses prepared for war*, (compare Joel ii. 4,) especially the form of their heads; *and* whereas common locusts have some brilliant ornaments on their heads, and various parts of their bodies, I observed, with regard to these, that *on their heads* [*were*] *as it were, crowns like gold; and their faces* were *like the faces of men;* which two circumstances gave me to understand, that they were intended as an emblem of mighty and powerful men, who were to reign over various
8 provinces and kingdoms. *And they had* on their heads long *tresses* of hair, *like the tresses of women;* whereas common locusts have only a down upon their breasts. *And* whereas other animals of that name have large strong teeth, *their teeth were like the* [*teeth of*] *lions*, sharp
9 and pointed, as well as large and strong. *And* instead of the fine down on the breasts of common locusts, *they had breast-plates like breast-plates of iron; and* whereas common locusts make a terrible noise with their wings, *the noise* which these strange and symbolical locusts made, by the motion *of their wings*, [*was*] *like the noise of chariots*, [*and*] *many horses rushing to war;* so that they seemed to tear the ground with their rage and fury, and to shake the air with
10 their neighings. *And* instead of being formed at the lower end of their bodies, as other locusts are, which have no stings, but are quite inoffensive and innocent animals, *these* creatures *had tails like scorpions, and their stings were in their tails; and their power*, as I observed above, [*was*] given them *to hurt* the earth, and *men* its inhabitants, for about *five months*, or about an
11 hundred and fifty years. *And they had a king over them*, wherein they further differed from the locust kind, (Prov. xxx. 27,) who is *the angel*

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

9 And they had breast-plates as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless

d A kind of hieroglyphical representation.] As there are no animals in nature answerable to those which are here described, I take it for granted, that as the *four animals* mentioned above are *hieroglyphics of angels*, so are these of *mischievous* creatures. Compare chap. iv. 7, *note* f.

e *Abaddon.*]

tomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

12 One wo is past; *and* behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the sixth angel sounded and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared, for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to

gel of the bottomless pit, and the great head of those apostate spirits who dwell there; *whose name is in the Hebrew language, Abaddon*[e]; *and in the Greek, he has the name of Apollyon*: both the one, and the other, expressing his destructive nature, and the dreadful havock he makes, wherever his attempts are successful. SECT. xii. Rev. IX. 11.

And thus, *one woe is gone; [and] behold yet other two woes besides it, coming*, threatening yet more terrible calamities than these. 12

And upon this *the sixth angel sounded; and I* did not see any immediate appearance in consequence of it; but I *heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which was before God*, (which seemed therefore to come from the most holy place which was directly behind it,) *Saying to the sixth angel, who* still *had the trumpet* which he had sounded in his hand, *Loosen* now *the four angels*[f], *which are bound in the great river Euphrates*; who were intended to represent some potentates arising from that part of the world, who, in the period referred to, should become very famous throughout the earth, for their exploits and atchievements. 13 14

And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for a certain period of time, signified, according to the prophetic reckoning, by *an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year*[g]; *that they might* 15

e *Abaddon.*] When the *etymology* is so evident, and so particularly explained by the *author*, I cannot but wonder at Dr. *More's* endeavour to explain it another way, as referring to the profession which the Mahometans should make of maintaining the doctrine of the *Unity*. See *More's Theol. Works*, p. 130.

f *The four angels which are bound*] Grotius refers this to the *Roman army* under four commanders, which came from the borders of this river. Mr. Mede, to the four *beglerbegs* of the Turks; and he interprets, ver. 17, of *guns* invented about that time, and used by them in their successful war upon the Europeans. See the passage at large in *More's Theol. Works*, p. 130, 131. They, who refer this passage to the rise of the *Turkish Ottoman* empire, suppose that the four angels mean either four provinces, or four cities near Euphrates, from whence considerable leaders arose, who pushed on, and advanced the Turkish conquests; and Mr. Pyle, and others, have endeavoured to confirm this interpretation. But, as the Turkish empire did not commence till the 13th century, this event seems to be too late in the successive order of periods, and correspondent events. Mr. Lowman's interpretation seems to me much more probable, which refers it to the re-union of the divided Saracen power, their invading and ravaging Europe, till they were defeated by Charles Martel; and agreeable to ver. 20, 21, the sufferers were so far from repenting, that *image-worship* was confirmed by order of the Pope, and the authority of *councils* in the *east* and *west*. This period reaches from A. D. 675, to A. D. 750.

g *Of an hour, and a day, &c.*] Dr. Lloyd, bishop of Worcester, in his interpretation of this passage, foretold, many years before it happened, that peace would be concluded with the Turks in the year 1698, which accordingly came to pass; and that they should no more renew their wars against the popish Christians. His argument was, that the *angels loosed* were the commanders of the many Turkish squadrons

SECT. xii.

Rev. IX. 15.

might make a great slaughter among the inhabitants of the earth; or, as it was expressed to me in the vision, according to the language used before, might *kill a third part of* the *men*, who after the preceding plagues continued upon it.

to slay the third part of men.

16 They accordingly appeared, as leading on a mighty army; *and the number of the horsemen* they led on, *was* immensely great, represented to me by *two myriads of myriads*, that is, no less than two hundred millions. *And I heard the number of them* thus mentioned to me, as it was

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 impossible for me to count them. *And I saw the horses, and those that sat upon them thus, in* [*their*] *appearance;* that is, *having breast-plates of fire, and hyacinth, and brimstone*, which seemed to send forth blue, burning flames, which went devouring before them; *and the heads of the horses* [*were*] *like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths went fire and smoke, and brimstone*, to represent the courage and fierceness of these armies, and the irresistible destruction they should make, wherever they

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

18 marched. And *with* the united force of *these three things*, that is, *by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, that went out of their mouths, they slew a third part of men*, as

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 was declared above. *And* as the destroyers, represented by the locusts, appeared as having devouring teeth, and stings like scorpions in their tails, these had likewise a double provision of mischievous furniture; for *their powers are* partly *in their mouth*, from whence, as I have already said, the fire appeared to issue, *and in their tails; and their tails* also [*are*] *like serpents, having heads, and with them*, as well as

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 with their mouths, *they injure* men. Thus they were represented as bringing a most fearful destruction on the human species. *Yet* it was not productive of such a reformation as might have

20 And the rest of the

squadrons who had been before subject to the Sultan of Babylon. And as for the time here mentioned, he endeavours to shew it to be, in the *prophetic* stile, 396 *years;* and computing from their conquest at Prousse, in 1302, by adding 396, the number will be 1698. See Bishop *Burnet's History of his Times*, Vol. I. p. 204. But how lucky soever the *conjecture* was, it does not convince me, that it is the true interpretation; and so much the less, as it seems evident to me, the year spoken of in this book, consists only of 360 days. Besides, the Turks have renewed their war on the popish Christians, particularly on the Emperor and the republic of Venice, in 1716, and since. As for the phrases, *an hour, a day*, &c. I do not understand them; they may, perhaps, only signify a determined, limited time, as such expressions in scripture frequently do; though they would seem most naturally, and agreeable to the prophetic reckoning, to denote about 391 years.

h *Not*

the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

have been expected: *the remainder of men who died not by these plagues, did not repent of the* wicked *works of their hands*, nor reform those abominations which had brought down destruction on their brethren; and particularly, did not forsake those detestable superstitions which had been so offensive to God, *that they might not worship demons*[h], *and* senseless *idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood; which*, instead of having any Divine properties, are destitute of the senses common to men, and even to brutes, as they *can neither see, nor hear, nor walk*. *And they repented not of* other crimes more immediately affecting their fellow-creatures, such for instance as *their murders, and their sorceries*[i]; *nor their fornication, nor their thefts* and robberies, by which they had so notoriously injured all about them, and bid defiance to every law, but that of their own unruly appetites and passions, to which they were held in the basest subjection.

SECT. XII.

Rev. IX. 20.

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. 21

IMPROVEMENT.

IT is exceeding natural to reflect, while reading this representation, how exactly the mightiest princes, and most savage destroyers of mankind, execute the *plan* of Divine *Providence*, and fulfil the decrees of God; even while they are intending nothing, but the gratification of their own ambition, and avarice, and cruelty. *The angel of God* holds the *keys of the bottomless pit*; and it is by Divine permission, that these voracious *locusts* issue forth and infest the earth. The ministers of God's pleasure, *bind* the messengers of destruction, and *loosen* them at the Divine command. And the season, wherein they shall ravage the world, is here limited to *a year, to a day, to an hour*: *ABADDON, APOLLYON*, the great and mighty destroyer, cannot effect the least of his mischievous and ruinous purposes, without the permission of the Preserver and Redeemer of mankind; and cannot go beyond his limits. And even the mischief which he does, is intended and

Ver. 4, 1, 3, 15, 5, 11, 15

h *Not worship demons.*] This *demon-worship* Mr. Mede has taken great pains to prove, to be the worship of *dead men*, which is so common in the *church of* Rome. As for their *worshipping idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone*, the fact is as evident, as that the heathens themselves ever practised such idolatrous worship.

i *Sorceries.*] By φαρμακειων, Dr. *Clarke* understands all the superstitious methods of making men *fancy* themselves to be religious, by what *others* can do for, or to them, or what they can do for themselves, without the practice of true righteousness and virtue. *Clarke's* xviith *Serm.* p. 168. But others understand by it the arts of *poisoning*.

a *Angel*

SECT. XII. and over-ruled to subserve the wisest and kindest designs. But O, how grievous is it to think of that degree of obstinacy and perverseness which so generally prevails in the world, and which Ver. 20, 21 renders men so *incorrigible*, under the most painful chastisements *Satan* is permitted to inflict. Send forth, O Lord, the gentle influences of thy Spirit, and melt those hearts, which will not be broken by the weightiest strokes of thy vengeance; and deliver us from a temper, so much resembling that of *hell*, and so evidently leading down to those dreadful abodes; the temper of those, who are hardened by correction, and *in the time of their affliction* and misery, *increase* and *multiply* their transgressions against thee.

SECT. XIII.

The vision of a mighty angel appearing in great glory, who had in his hand a little book, which St. John was commanded to eat. Rev. X. 1. *throughout.*

SECT. XIII.

Rev. X. 1.

REVELATION X. 1.

A MOST beautiful *and* wonderful scene now opened itself to my view; for *I saw another mighty angel*, who carried, in his appearance, the marks of unusual strength and vigour, *descending from heaven, clothed with a cloud* [a], so that I could not discern the full lustre of his whole body; though variegated with the rays it either reflected or transmitted, it appeared very glorious; *and* the complete circle of *a rainbow* [*was*] *about his head, and his face* [*was*] bright *as the* meridian *sun;* so that I could not bear to gaze directly upon it. *And* I had reason to think there was an extraordinary lustre emitted from all the other parts of his body; for 2 even *his feet* were *like pillars of* lucid *fire. And he had in his hand a little book open*, which I afterwards understood to be the volume of the Divine decrees, to be communicated to me. *And he put his right foot upon the sea, and the left* foot *upon the earth*, to signify the Divine dominion over both, and the concern of both, in what 3 was further to be transacted. *And he cried with a loud*, solemn, and awful *voice, as a lion roars;*

REV. X. 1.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

2 And he had in his hand a little book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth.

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth; and when he

a *Angel clothed with a cloud.*] The beauties of this noble description are finely illustrated by that most elegant and pious writer, the Rev. Mr. *James Hervey*, in his *Meditations*, Vol. II. page 21, 22.

b *Lion*

he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

SECT. xiii.

Rev. X. 4.

roars[b]; *and when he had cried, the seven thunders*, which I had heard before, *uttered their voices* again, responsive to his, and to increase the terror of so tremendous a scene. *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to have written* the contents of what they had uttered; for loud as their voices were, there was something articulate and intelligible in the sound; *and* just in that instant, *I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up* in secrecy *what the seven thunders have spoken, and write them not;* for they are indeed, intended for thy information, but not for that of the public. *And the angel which I saw* with so many 5 ensigns of distinction, *standing* with one foot *on the sea, and* the other *on the earth, lifted up his hand towards heaven*, with a gesture of solemnity and reverence, as appealing to the great Sovereign of the universe, *And sware by* the 6 eternal Jehovah, even by *him who liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven, and those things which are in it, and the earth, and the things which are in it, and the sea, and the things which are in it, that time should be no longer*[c]: that the time of the judgments, to be signified by the pouring out of the seven vials, should not be much longer delayed; and that, when it came, the whole economy of the world should soon draw to a conclusion, and all the periods of time be consummated, that the more important

b *Lion roars.*] The original word, μυκαλαι, rather signifies *bellows;* but that English word has an idea annexed to it, which appeared to me not to suit the *dignity* of this description.

c *That time should be no longer.*] The word χρονος sometimes signifies *delay*, as well as *time*. And, according to the former version, the meaning is, that there should be no *delay* of the destruction of the church's enemies, and of its prosperous and glorious condition. In the latter view, it signifies that the end of time, and the consummation of all things, should soon come. Though the former sense seems to be principally intended, yet I own myself not to be so certain as absolutely to determine it. I think it is evident, that some of the *concluding prophecies* of this book refer to the *eternal state*, and therefore I have taken that sentiment into the paraphrase, though not to the exclusion of the former sense: which, as I said, seems to be principally intended, considering the connection, and that the interval between the *pouring out of the seventh vial*, and the consummation of all things, must, at least, be more than a thousand years; and, perhaps, a much more considerable period. Dr. *More* is of opinion, that the only meaning of this clause is, that the time was elapsed which had been marked out by the period of *three years and a half*. See his *Theolog. Works*, p. 122.—Grotius refers the accomplishment of it to the vengeance to be taken upon the Jews, by Adrian and his successors. Compare *Saurin's Serm.* Vol. I. p. 1, 2. Mr. Lowman renders the clause, *the time shall not be yet:* that is, the time of the glorious state of the church shall not be yet; but it shall not be long to it; for *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel*, as it follows, *the mystery of God shall be fulfilled*, &c.

d *Mystery,*

SECT. XIII.

Rev. X. 7.

ant scenes of eternity might open: He sware, I say, that the delay should not be much longer, *but* that it should hasten to its end, *in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about quickly to sound*, and was to introduce the period of the seven vials; and that, consequent on the pouring out of the last vial, *the mystery of God*[d], *as he had revealed its glad tidings to his servants, the prophets, should be fulfilled*, in the utter ruin and destruction of all the enemies of the church, and in its happy and glorious exaltation[e].

8 *And the voice which I* before *heard from heaven*, now *spake to me again, and said, Go*, and *take the little book, which*, as thou perceivest, *is open, out of the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth;* for it is intended for thy use and information. (Compare

9 Jer. xv. 16.) *And* accordingly *I went to the angel, and* awful as his appearance was, *I said to him* boldly, in consequence of the Divine command, *Give me the little book* which thou holdest in thine hand; *and he said unto me, Take* [*it*,] as Ezekiel did that which was shewn to him, (Ezek. iii. 1, 2,) *and eat it up;* to signify thy receiving it into thy mind, and digesting there the events to which it relates; *and it shall imbitter thy belly but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey;* to signify, that how pleasant soever it may be to be honoured with such revelations, the contents of these, in thine after-reflections, shall be very bitter and grievous.

10 *And*, accordingly, *I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and* seemed to myself, to *eat it up; and* the event exactly answered what he had said to me; for, *in my mouth it was sweet as honey, but when I had eaten it, my belly was*

11 *bitter. And he said to me*, Thou hast not yet dispatched the whole of thy work, in what thou hast already registered, of these visions of the Lord; but *thou must again prophesy*[f] *to many people*

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many

d *Mystery of God.*] Dr. *Butler*, the late worthy Bishop of Durham, understands by this, the *great mystery* of Providence, in suffering vice and confusion to prevail so much in the world. See *Butler's Anal.* p. 40.

e *Should be fulfilled.*] As it is here said, that the mystery of God should be *fulfilled*, it seems plainly to intimate, that the things yet to be revealed should extend to the end of time; and when it is declared, that this should be fulfilled in *the days of the voice of the seventh angel, who was about to sound*, it intimates, that the remainder of time, even to the end of the world, should be comprehended in that period of prophecy, to which the *seventh trumpet*, introductory to the vials, relates.

f *Again prophesy.*] Mr. Mede infers from

ny peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. The oracles thou hast yet to deliver, shall be propagated through many countries, translated into a variety of languages, and perused by persons of various ranks and conditions, and some of them the most eminent and conspicuous; but fear not to deliver them, being assured that He, by whom they are inspired, will take care they shall be punctually fulfilled.

SECT. XIII.

Rev. X. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

If other parts of this *chapter* should seem to be less pregnant with important practical instructions, perhaps the design was, that we might be engaged to fix our entire and undivided attention on the awful words of this illustrious *angel;* whose appearance is described in colours so exceeding beautiful and striking; with the radiance of the *sun* streaming from his countenance; the variegated colours of the *rainbow encircling his head;* of a stature so vast and majestic, that he at once *bestrode the earth and the sea;* with his hand solemnly *lifted up to heaven;* with *a voice awful as thunder, appealing* to the venerable *name of God the Creator of the heavens, of the earth, of the sea,* and of all their various inhabitants, in order to add the sanction of an inviolable *oath,* to a declaration, which in itself from such a Divine messenger, was worthy of absolute and entire credit; a declaration, *that time should be no longer;* which is a certain truth, in the most sublime and interesting sense of which the words are capable. *Time,* as distinguished into *days,* and *weeks,* and *months,* and *years,* by the revolution of the heavenly luminaries, when the most resplendent of these are extinguished in their orbs, as they quickly will: *when the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood; time* shall then I say be absorbed in an immeasurable eternity. And O, *what an eternity!* An eternity, either of perfect and inconceivable felicity, or hopeless and remediless misery.—But besides this general construction, there is an important sense in which the proclamation of *this celestial herald* shall be fulfilled, with regard to individuals; *that time shall be*

Ver. 1 2 3 5, 6

from hence, that *the apostle* is about to go over *the same period* of time he had before been discoursing of, giving an account of the state of *the church,* as he had just done of the state of *the empire.* But *the new* description, and *new* events to which they refer, which are introduced here, and constitute *the following chapter,* may be sufficient, without any peculiarity of interpretation, to justify the expression. See the preceding *note.*

a *Measure*

SECT. XIII.

be no longer ; the time of Divine patience in waiting upon us ; *the time* in which we shall be continued under the sound of the gospel, and the offers of mercy, and the means of salvation ; *the time* in which we shall be conversant with these scenes of mortality, and with the persons who are here most familiar to us, at least in the present circumstances of their being. *The period*, during which we are to inhabit this earth, and enjoy our spiritual advantages, or our worldly possessions and pleasures, is confined within very narrow limits. The *oath* of this mighty angel is, perhaps, just ready to be accomplished, and *time is closing*, and eternity is opening upon us. O that we may consider time and all its concerns, as very shortly to vanish, that our thoughts and our cares may be directed more and more to our own eternal interest, and to that of our fellow creatures. The *Judge is* even at the *door ;* let us endeavour therefore to be ready, let us improve every transient moment to the purposes for which it was given us ; and in these views of the brevity of time, and the importance of preparing for eternity, let us detest all the pleasures and allurements of sin ; for they will soon appear like the *mysterious* morsel of the
8—11 *apostle, bitter as wormwood in the belly* though with deceitful and fatal indulgence, we may, for a few moments, have rolled them, like a sweet morsel, *under our tongues ;* vainly desiring to prolong those pleasures, which can serve only to add more keen and exquisite sensibility to our future pain.

SECT. XIV.

The vision of the angel commanding St. John to measure the temple : and declaring that the Gentiles should tread down the outer-court ; and that the two witnesses should be slain, and raised from the dead, and received into heaven ; after which, the triumphs of Divine vengeance over their enemies are celebrated. Rev. XI. 1—18.

REVELATION XI. 1.

SECT. XIV.

Rev. XI. 1.

AND when I had eaten the book according to the Divine command, *there was given to me*, as there was shewn to Ezekiel, whose vision bore so great a resemblance to mine, Ezek. xl. xliii. *a reed, like a* [*measuring*] *rod ; and the angel*, which had spoken to me before, *stood* by me, *saying, Arise and measure the temple of God* [a], *and the altar, and* the space filled by *those*

REV. XI. 1.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

a *Measure the temple of God.*] From the proportion between the *area* of the *temple*, and the *outer court*, supposed to be as one to 3 and 1-half, Mr. Mede, understanding

SECT. XIV.

Rev. XI. 2.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles : and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

those who worship at it in the inner-court ; *And the outer-court of the temple, throw out* of the account, *and measure it not ; for* there shall be such great disorders introduced, that *it shall be given to the Gentiles, and they shall trample,* not only *upon* that, but upon *the holy city,* for the space of *forty-two months* ; such corruptions shall prevail in the Christian church, though by profession the holy city, and the temple of God, that they who pretend to be its inhabitants, and to worship in it, shall be no better in the Divine account, than Gentiles. *And* in the mean time, I will raise up some to bear an united testimony against these growing corruptions; *and I will give to my two witnesses* [b] an authoritative [*commission*] *and they shall prophesy* all this while, that is, during the forty-two months, or *a thousand two hundred* [*and*] *sixty days, clothed in sackcloth* [c]; to denote their afflicted condition *These are* dear and precious to me, as Joshua and Zerubbabel among the Jews of old ; and in reference to the emblems under which I represented those my faithful servants, (Zech. iv. 3, 11, 14.) I may call these, *the two olive-trees, and the two* burning and shining *lamps, who stand before the God of the* whole *earth ;* high in his esteem, and continually in his presence, planted like olive-trees in his house, or kindled like the sacred lamps in the candlestick of the sanctuary. *And if any one will* obstinately *injure them,* encouraged by the gentleness of their appearance, and the seeming

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days clothed in sackcloth.

3

4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

4

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth,

5

derstanding by the *temple* the pure uncorrupted state of the *church ;* and, by the *outer-court,* its corrupted state, endeavours to prove, that the latter did not entirely commence till the beginning of the *fifth* century; inferring also from hence the authority of *the four first general councils.* The argument may be seen at large *in his Works,* p. 588, 589. But it does not seem to require a particular examination, especially in the face of so many notorious errors, and absurd superstitions, as were evidently introduced into the *church* long before the time in question, How Grotius should imagine it to signify, that *the temple* should not be re-built by Adrian, though Jerusalem should, is to me very surprising : I doubt not but it signifies *the profanation* of the church by growing *idolatry and superstition,* though some few should preserve their purity.

b *Two witnesses.*] Some have strangely supposed these are Enoch and Elijah, who are to come to fight against antichrist. See *Limb. Theol.* 7. xi. 31. Dr. More understands it of unpolluted *priests* and faithful *magistrates,* appearing for reformation. Others, of the Old and New Testament. But the learned Bishop Lloyd, of the Waldenses and Albigenses. Perhaps it may signify *any witnesses* for reformation, who should be raised up during this period ; illustrated by *two,* as that concurring number was necessary, according *to the law,* to make the testimony *valid ;* or to intimate, that their number should be but *small.* See Mr. *Lowman in loc.* who proves, there has been a succession of faithful witnesses.

c *Clothed in sackcloth.*] This was the habit *of mourners,* and suited to their prophetic character, Isa. xx. 2. This period is the same with that after described as the time of the *woman's abode in the wilderness,* chap. xii. 6 : Dan. vii. 25. xii. 7.

d *Fire*

SECT. XIV.

Rev. XI. 5.

ing weakness of their present state, he shall find to his cost, that they are under an almighty protection. Their cries to God shall be heard, and such sudden and irresistible vengeance shall follow, that *fire shall* seem to *come out of their mouth* [d], *and devour their enemies* at once; it shall not merely scorch and terrify, but utterly destroy them: *and* I pronounce it again, *If any one will injure them, so must he be put to death.*

6 *These*, despised as they are, *have power* with God, like my servant Elijah of old, (1 Kings xvii. 1,) by their prayers *to shut heaven* [e], *so that no rain shall be showered down in the days of their prophecy, and* like Moses and Aaron, (Exod. vii. 20,) *they have power over the waters, to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth as often as they will, with every plague;* such is the prevalence of their prayers with God that they may be said, as it were to be armed

7 with his omnipotence. *And when they shall have finished their testimony*, according to the plan of Divine Providence, *the* fierce and *savage beast which ascends out of the abyss* [f], and is afterwards to be described, *shall make war against them, and shall conquer*, and triumph over

8 *them* for a while, *and* carry his success so far as to *kill them. And their* dead *corpses* [*shall lie*] unburied *in the* open *street of the great city* [g] *which is spiritually called*, on account of its lewdness and persecutions, *SODOM and EGYPT* [h]; *where also our Lord was crucified*; that

mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt,

d *Fire shall come out of their mouth.*] I think it highly probable this expression may be *figurative* and intended to express the awful vengeance which Christ will take on their enemies in that *day when he is revealed in flaming fire*, and when the injury received by any of his servants, and especially his *faithful witnesses*, shall be remembered, and their wrongs fully avenged.

e *Shut heaven, &c.*] Lord Chief Justice Hale seems to think it is intimated here, that the spirit of Moses and Elias should be in them, *Elijah having called down fire from heaven*, and hindered *the rain*; and Moses having *turned water into blood.* (*See Hale's Contemp.* Vol. II. page 175.)—It indeed seems to intimate, that God would interpose for their defence, as he pleaded the cause of his *people and witnesses* of old, in the awful manner here described.

f *Out of the abyss.*] By the *abyss* Dr. More understands *the sea*, and thinks this passage is to be explained by what follows, chap. xiii. 1. I am rather of opinion, it alludes to what had been said before, chap. ix. 11. where *a king of the locusts* is mentioned as a most destructive creature, called also *the angel of the abyss*; and it is certain, the word θηριον is used with this latitude. Compare Acts xxviii. 4, 5.

g *The great city.*] Mr. Fleming understands this of the German, that is, the Roman empire; of which Bohemia was a part. Indeed, it is probable the whole Roman empire may be here represented, *as one idolatrous* and *impure city*; as elsewhere, the *church of Christ* is represented by one *pure, holy*, and *glorious city*. It may intimate the extreme persecution many of God's witnesses should suffer; and that their enemies should triumph over them so much, that his cause should seem to be quite ruined.

h *Sodom and Egypt.*] The *lewdness* of Sodom

Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another: because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth:

11 And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them: and they stood upon their feet,

that is, in the place, where he has suffered so much in his spiritual members, that he may be said to have been crucified over again. *And [persons] of [various] people, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, shall look on their dead bodies three days and an half*, and maliciously insult over them; *and they shall not permit their corpses to be laid in their graves* which should be prepared for them. *And they who dwell upon the earth, shall rejoice over them, and be glad and* with mutual congratulation, *shall send gifts to each other*, to testify their great exultation, *because these two prophets*, who *tormented those who dwelt upon the earth*, by their plain and faithful remonstrances, shall be entirely silenced; and as they suppose, for ever removed out of any capacity of molesting them. All these things I distinctly saw, just as the angel had represented them to me in his description; and while I was looking, with the greatest concern, upon the venerable remains of these two excellent persons, denied the common rites of burial, *and* exposed to all the insults of their enemies, I saw, that *after three days and an half*[i], *the Spirit of life*, communicated *from God*, who quickeneth all things, *entered into them, and they stood upon their feet* again, to renew

SECT. XIV.

Rev. XI. 9.

10

11

Sodom, and the *cruelty* of Egypt are so celebrated in *scripture*, as to make them proper *emblems* of these evils in general. And the abominable wickedness of *the church of Rome*, in both these respects, (I suppose not to be equalled in any other society of men, calling themselves a *church*,) is most justly, as well as severely, expressed by these *appellations*. When one sees their *places of worship* every where adorned with *images* of a *crucified Saviour*, one would think, (as *our Lord* says with respect to the *garniture* which the *persecuting Pharisees* bestowed upon the sepulchres of the ancient prophets, that they meant to perpetuate the memory of the dead *with honour*,) that these persecutors intended to *crucify Jesus in effigy*: a sentiment, perhaps, not disagreeable to the *original* design.

i *Three days and an half.*] Very different interpretations have been given of this period of time. Mr. *Fleming* thinks it to his purpose to observe, that from the death of Andrew Pallicka, the last Bohemian martyr, to the appearance of Carolstadius and Zuinglius, at the beginning of the reformation was just *three years and an half*. See *Flem. of the Resur.* p 144.—— The above mentioned Bishop Lloyd imagined it was fulfilled in the slaughter of the Albigenses and Waldenses, in the year 1686; and they arose in 1690. He supposes Archbishop Usher's celebrated prophecy a mistake of this place; he thought the *treading down the court* was the affliction of external professors; (whereas it was, indeed, the general prevalence of idolatry in the church;) and that the *witnesses* were slain by the *king of France*, not by the pope; and that the *earthquake*, (ver. 13,) signified the destruction of the kingdom of France. Some think here is an allusion to the time of our Saviour's lying in the grave; and that it intimates, that the time of the *witnesses* suffering, will be in proportion to the time of their prophecy, which is described as a time of *persecution*; and so it comports with *three times and an half*, 1260 *days*, or 42 *months*. It may, in general, signify a certain limited time; and, perhaps, *three days and an half*, may be mentioned, in reference to the state of a *dead body*, which will seldom keep longer without corruption. See Mr. *Lowman in loc.*

k *Ascended*

SECT. XIV.

Rev. XI.

new their testimony; *and great fear* immediately *fell upon those who looked upon them*, when they saw so wonderful a resurrection. 12. *And they*, that is, the witnesses, *heard a great voice, saying unto them from heaven*, in loud accents, which I likewise distinctly heard, *Come* ye *up hither; and they* accordingly *ascended up to heaven*[k] *in a cloud*, as our Lord had done in the sight of his apostles; *and their enemies*, with infinite surprise, and fruitless rage, *looked on them*, without being able to hinder or oppose the marvellous event. 13. *And in that hour*, as an earthquake attended the resurrection of our Lord, so likewise, at the ascension of these witnesses, *there was a great earthquake; and a tenth part* of the buildings *of the city fell* down to the ground, magnificent and sumptuous as they were; *and seven thousand men*, some of them of great name and figure, *were killed*[l] *by the earthquake; and the rest were terrified, and* their alarm wrought more kindly upon them, than judgments had done upon some others; for they *gave glory to the God of heaven*, as the author of these awful events. 14. *The second woe is past* [*and*] a terrible one it is; but let none imagine all ground of alarm is over, for *behold the third woe cometh quickly*, to succeed it. 15. *And the seventh angel sounded; and* immediately *there were great voices* of thunder *in heaven, saying*, At length the happy, the triumphant period is approaching, and seems to be even already come; when it may be said, that *the kingdoms of the world are become* [*the kingdoms*] *of our Lord, and of his Christ*[m], his anointed

feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; *and* behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall

k *Ascended up to heaven.*] This was no doubt, to signify, that the cause of true and genuine Christianity should not only be revived, but *exalted*; and that it should have so illustrious a triumph over all opposition, as no *earthly* elevation was sufficient *adequately* to represent.

l *Seven thousand men were killed.*] This seems to represent some *great calamities*, which were to befall the enemies of the *reformation* during the following period, and which would be a great means of promoting it.

m *The kingdoms of the world*, &c.] The learned Grotius, than whom no great commentator was ever more mistaken in his explication of this book, strangely sinks the importance of the event here referred to, by expounding it of the *liberty* given to the Christians to profess their religion in Judea, when the Jews were banished. Mr. Mede, and Mr. Clarke, refer it to the reformation. Dr. *Samuel Clarke* says, *Whether this, and the like passages, shall have a literal accomplishment by the universal prevalency of the gospel of peace upon earth, or only in the new heavens, wherein dwelleth righteousness, is a secret in the breast of Providence, which we ought not to be over-confident in explaining.* See his *Posth. Serm.* Vol. III. p. 295. But it seems probable, that this may be designed to intimate, that in the *period* of time signified by the *seventh trumpet, and the vials*, following it, there should be a triumph of the Christian cause in its power and purity, notwithstanding all the attempts made to pervert and corrupt it; which has been, in

shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders which sate before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

anointed Son; *and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders, that sate before* the throne of *God on their* splendid *thrones,* as already described, *fell* prostrate *upon their faces, and worshipped God* with profound reverence, on hearing these glad tidings; *Saying, We give thanks unto thee, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and who wast, and who art to come;* we adore the triumphs of thine omnipotence, and of thy wisdom; *because,* though for a while thou didst suffer the interest of thy kingdom to be in part over-borne, as if the adversary were stronger than thou art, *thou hast* at length *taken* to thyself *thy great power, and hast reigned* with an uncontrouled dominion. *And the nations were wroth,* and were transported with rage and pride, that their vain schemes were thus powerfully opposed: *and* having suffered them, for a season, to exert their impotent efforts, *thy wrath came* in its awful turn; thou didst display the terrors of thy superior vengeance; *and the time of the dead* came, *when they should be judged,* and the blood of thy people avenged, *and* when *a reward should be given to thy* faithful *servants*[n], *the* inspired *prophets, and to the saints, and* on the whole, *to them that fear thy name,* both *small and great:* for such is thy goodness, that thou wilt not forget any one of them; *and* the period is at length come, [*when thou*] *shouldest* interpose in an awful and irresistible manner, to *destroy those that destroy* and corrupt *the earth* by their many vices; and particularly, by their cruel ravages, in persecuting those, who were, with the greatest integrity of heart, solicitous to have reformed it.

SECT. XIV.

Rev. XI. 16.

17

18

IMPROVEMENT.

LONG hath the *court of God's temple* been *trodden under foot by the Gentiles,* and a party of very corrupt and degenerate *Christians,* (if they at all deserve the name, though they proudly arrogate to themselves the title of the *Catholic church,*) been introducing and countenancing all the fopperies and absurdities of *pagan superstition,* as well as more than the horrors of *pagan cruelty,* so

Ver. 2

in fact, the case. Compare chap. vi. ver. 17, *note* n.

n *A reward shall be given to thy servants.*] The reward to be given to all that *fear God,* both *small and great,* seems to be the *final* reward at the *judgment-day.* This therefore represents that *judgment-day* as now *nearly* approaching.

SECT. XIV.

so as indeed to have disgraced not the *gospel* alone, but *human nature* itself. A wise and gracious Providence hath raised up
Ver. *witnesses* for the truth in all ages; and it is a signal honour to
3 bear a faithful and courageous testimony against these enormous corruptions, though it were unto bonds and imprisonment, and even at the expence of *life*. Those noble and heroic confessors God hath remarkably supported; and even when they had been
6 in a state of *mourning* and *oppression*, they have borne their *testimony* and *prophesied; their prayers* have been remembered before God, and many have been *smitten*, who *injured* and oppressed
7 them. But, notwithstanding this, *the beast* hath continued his *war* upon the saints, and their oppressions have increased, until in many places, they have been cast down, and trodden in the dust, and *their blood hath been poured out like water on the earth.* Thus hath that *great city*, the metropolis of the world, once *faithful* and
8 *celebrated*, become even as *Sodom* and *Egypt*, or even as *Jerusalem, where Christ* himself, our Divine Master, *was crucified.* Thus have the enemies of the truth triumphed over the servants of the Lord, and have erected *trophies* of their victory. But, thanks be to God, their triumph shall not be perpetual; Christ
9, 10 our Redeemer will *revive* the expiring cause, in a manner as glorious and wonderful as *a resurrection from the dead;* he will
11, 12 glorify the *remnant* of his people; he will cause *the earth to tremble*, and *shake down the towers* of the enemy; and when the
13 *first and second woe is past*, will bring upon them *a third* and more
14 terrible *woe.* In the faith of this triumphant event let us rejoice; and though in our day we see not this glorious scene, let us consider it as approaching, when *the seventh angel shall sound*, and when all *the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord,*
15 *and of his Christ.* Let our *prayers* do all that the most earnest prayers can do, towards promoting this great event. *O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come,* we beseech thee to *take to thyself thy great power and reign;* for the proudest of the ene-
17 mies who oppose thy kingdom, reign, and even live, only by thy permission. Overbear, by thy superior rebuke, the *rage* of the angry nations; and give *patience* to thy afflicted servants, that if
18 they should wait even till *the dead be judged*, they may never resign the hope of *the reward* which thou wilt at length confer upon them: not only *on the prophets*, and most eminent and distinguished of the saints, *but on all them that fear thy* glorious and tremendous *name;* on the *small*, as well as on the *great;* when the *destroyers* of the church, and of the earth, shall be *destroyed together. Amen.*

SECT.

SECT. XV.

On a view of the temple of God, as opened in consequence of the seventh trumpet, a vision appears, representing the multiplication of the church, and the attempt to be made by the devil upon it, under the emblem of a woman bringing forth a son, attacked and persecuted by a great dragon. Rev. XI. 19, XII. *throughout.*

Rev. XI. 19. AND the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

REVELATION XI. 19. SECT. XV.

AND when these acts of adoration passed, upon the sounding of the seventh angel, *the temple of God was opened in heaven; and* the veil, which seemed to separate the most holy place, being drawn aside, *the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple;* to signify further manifestations of the Divine presence, which were now to be made. *And* as, when the law was given from mount Sinai, the whole atmosphere seemed in a violent commotion, which was communicated to the most solid parts of nature, so *there were* now *lightenings, and* loud and awful *voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and* a *great* storm of *hail*, which had been described as a circumstance attending the Divine appearance, under former dispensations. (Compare Psal. cxiv. 4. & sim.) *And* thus ushered in, *there appeared a great sign in heaven, a woman* of a beautiful and majestic form, *clothed*, as it were, *with the* radiance of the meridian *sun*, streaming forth on all sides; which I understood as an emblem of the church of Christ, most gloriously arrayed through the comeliness and lustre which he puts upon her: *and the moon* was *under her feet*, to signify the conquest which the church should gain over all sublunary enjoyments and terrors: *and upon her head* there was *a crown of twelve stars*, to represent the twelve apostles, who had been so illustrious an ornament to that honoured society. *And*, to signify the increase of the Christian church, this woman, by which *she* was represented, *being* apparently *pregnant, cried out in travail, and* seemed as *in* violent *pangs to be delivered. And*, while she was in these circumstances of extremity, *there appeared another sign in heaven: and behold!* for it was a very memorable phenomenon,

Rev. XI. 19.

Rev. XII. 1.

CHAP. XII. 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

2 And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great

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Rev. XII. 3. nomenon, there was *a great* red *fiery dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns*[a]; *and upon his heads, seven crowns*, on each of them one; which represented Satan, the great enemy of the church, as animating a people, who were to answer, in a remarkable manner, to these mysterious and symbolical characters. *And* he appeared as having a long tail; and with it he took an horrible sweep over the compass of a considerable part of the heaven, on which he seemed to stand; and as it then appeared as decked with stars, whereby Christian ministers were especially represented, *his tail drew down a third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth;* which signifies, that many, whose business it was to enlighten and preserve others, should themselves be corrupted, by the attempts of this great and subtle deceiver, whose artifice and rage were so aptly represented, by the seducing nature of this vast and voracious dragon. *And the dragon stood* directly *before the woman who was about to bring forth, that when she was delivered, he might* immediately *devour her child*, for whose appearance he seemed eagerly to wait.

5 *And*, to signify the certain success of the church, and the care God would take to preserve it, *she* whom I saw in the vision as the representative of it, *brought forth a masculine son*[b], a male-child, who appeared of a vigorous constitution, and likely soon to advance to manhood; *who*, as I then learned, *was* destined by God to a most glorious triumph over all opposition; so as *to rule all the nations with a rod of iron*, which they

great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her

a *Dragon having seven heads, and ten horns.*] I suppose most of my readers will know, that a *dragon* is a vast *serpent* of enormous bulk; there is one of them about 23 *feet long*, preserved in the *repository* of the *royal society*. And Job, the celebrated African, assured me, that one of them carried away a live cow in its mouth, before his face. Nothing could be a more proper emblem of the *persecuting power*, that by the instigation of Satan, attacked Christians; or rather, of Satan, as instigating these persecuting powers, and those especially of Rome, under its different states, as heathen and Christian; for the *directing* agent was still the same. I apprehend therefore, that the *church* is here represented, *first*, as *pregnant*, to signify its state while the *empire* was heathen; the more *vigorous* state it afterwards arrived to, when such large accessions were made to the number of Christians, is described by the *birth of the child*; and its state, when an almost *universal* corruption was introduced, by its *abode in the wilderness*. *The dragon*, in the mean time, in all these various successions, labours if possible, to destroy it; at least to prevent the propagation of its interests.

b *Masculine son.*] As it was impossible, that υἱον *a son*, should be any other than ἄρσεν, *a male*, I conclude, that the conjunction of these two words was intended to express the *vigorous constitution* of the child, and what we properly call *a masculine form*, which may, or may not, be joined with the *male sex*. Such was Esau, who from thence had the name of a *child fully made*. Gen. xxv. 25.

c *Into*

her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne.

they should be unable successfully to resist. *And* as the strength of this dragon seemed vastly superior to that of the woman, or the new-born infant, *her child was*, on a sudden, *caught up to God, even to his throne*, there to be guarded as the charge and favourite of heaven, in full security from all the rage of his furious and destructive enemies. (Compare 2 Kings xi. 23.)

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Rev. XII. 5.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

And the woman, his mother *fled into the wilderness*[c], by which circumstance was represented to me, the obscure condition in which true Christianity should long remain, while antichristian principles and practices everywhere prevailed. There she dwelt, *where she had a place prepared* for her *by* the ever watchful Providence of God, *that she might there be nourished, one thousand two hundred* [*and*] *sixty days*[d], for God took care that she should be nourished, though in a wilderness, raising up friends and supporters for her, during that desolate and melancholy time. 6

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels,

And there was the appearance of a very formidable *war in heaven*, and several mighty battles seemed to be fought before my sight; *Michael*, the great leader of God's host, and therein an emblem of the great Emmanuel, *and his angels*, were marshalled on the one side; and they *made war against the dragon: and* on the other side, *the dragon made war* with him; *and his angels* likewise, consisting of many legions of infernal spirits, in confederacy with the great head of the apostacy, made war under 7

c *Into the wilderness.*] I think I never met with a *wilder* interpretation than that which Grotius gives of this place; referring it to the banishment of Christianity out of Rome, into little neighbouring towns and villages, (which, in comparison of that *capital city*, might seem a *wilderness*) during the time of the seduction of Simon Magus; an event neither certain in itself, nor if ever so certain, by any means answering to the description here given, and the *great* and *important* idea suggested, and so much insisted upon in this *prophecy*. It is on the same precarious principles that he explains the triumph of heaven on *casting out the dragon*, of Simon's being vanquished in his contest with St. Peter at Rome.

d *One thousand two hundred and sixty days.*] These days are *years* of Papal usurpation. Mr. *Fleming* (who hath the honour herein to be followed by Sir Isaac Newton, and Mr. Lowman, though not as I remember named by the *former*, whom the latter professes to follow,) supposes them to begin in the year 756, when Pepin of France made a grant to the Pope, of the *temporal dominion of Rome*, on the destruction of the Exarchate of Ravenna, to which that imperial city for a while belonged. Upon this the Pope began the *eighth head of Rome*; and the period of his continuing so will end, about the year 2016; or if (which seems most reasonable;) *prophetical years* be used in the computation, consisting of 360 *days*, about 2000; which he supposes will be the beginning of the millenium. *Flem. of Rev.* p. 120.

e *Neither*

SECT. XV.

under him. *Nevertheless they did not prevail* against the armies of God, *neither was place found for them any more in heaven*[e]; but being unable to stand their ground, they seemed to be expelled, and fall down to the earth. *And thus the great*, furious, and voracious *dragon was cast out*; [*even*] *the old serpent*, so long experienced in the arts of mischief: who, from his falsehood, is *called the devil*, or the false accuser; *and* from his malice, *Satan*, or the general adversary: he, *who deceives the whole world* by his subtle temptations, *was cast out* of heaven, and sunk down *to the earth, and his* confederate *angels were cast out with him*, following him in his ruin, as they had done in his guilt. *And I heard a great voice saying in heaven, Now is come the* long-expected *salvation; and the power, and the kingdom of our God* is now exerted and established; *and the authority of his Christ* shall now prevail against all opposition; *because the* malignant and perfidious *accuser of our brethren is* now *cast out, who* carried his malice to such a height, that he *accused them before our God day and night;* unrestrained by a sense of the Divine presence, he was ready, as in the instance of Job, (Job i. 9; ii. 5,) continually to charge them with the greatest evils before him, who was indeed the Witness of their integrity. *And* now *they have overcome him*, formidable as he appeared, with all his confederate angels; and it is *by the blood of the lamb* they have gained this glorious victory: its sacred efficacy has procured them Divine strength and grace; and the remembrance of it has wrought powerfully on their souls. *And* their victory has been, under this, in a great measure, occasioned *by the word of their testimony;* by that word of the gospel to which they had borne their testimony with so much fidelity, *and* at so great an expence; for *they loved not their lives, unto the death;* they exposed

Rev. XII. 8 9 10 11

8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength and the Kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

e *Neither was place found for them any more in heaven.*] I once thought this referred to a representation made to the apostle, in the vision, of the first expulsion of Satan from heaven; but upon considering that he, who is represented as *cast out* of the Divine presence, is described as *the accuser of the brethren*, who had *before* been *accusing them day and night before God*; I was induced to change my mind. On the whole, I am extremely dubious about this, and refer it to further consideration, whether this may not signify the conquest of Satan by Christ, by the first publication of the *gospel*. Mr. Lowman interprets it of the victory over Satan and his power, when Christianity had fully prevailed over heathenism in the empire, and when an effectual stop was put to the Mahometan imposture in these western parts.

f *Fly*

exposed themselves to the greatest dangers, and many of them actually met their death in this glorious conflict; but they fell to rise, and triumph and reign. And *therefore, rejoice, ye heavens and ye who inhabit them*, and, as it were, pitch your tents there; let all the celestial armies proclaim the victory with joy. But *woe to those that inhabit* the terraqueous globe, consisting of *the earth and the sea: for the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time;* and therefore, is maliciously bent to make the most he can of it, exerting one powerful effort more to establish and confirm his cause. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast out on the earth*, I perceived him to be greatly enraged; and saw that mindful of the original of the late war, *he persecuted the woman who had brought forth a male-child. And*, to signify the extraordinary provision that should be made for her deliverance, *there were* immediately *given to the woman two wings*, like those *of a great* and strong *eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness* [f], *unto her place*, which, as I observed before, was appointed for her; *where*, as I said, *she is nourished* for one thousand two hundred and sixty days; that is *for a time*, or one year, *and times*, or two years, *and half a time*, or year that is, for three years and an half, which is the same period. And thus she was hid *from the face of the serpent*, and preserved from his destructive efforts. *And the serpent threw out of his mouth* a flood of *water, like a river* [g], *after the woman*, as she was winging her flight from him, *that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. And the earth assisted the woman; and the earth opened its mouth, and drank up the flood which the dragon threw out of his mouth* [h], so that it sunk as fast as it fell, and could not swell into such a formidable current

SECT. XV.

Rev. XII. 12.

12 Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth, that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and a half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which

13 14 15 16

f *Fly into the wilderness.*] This is the *same* event that was represented, ver. 6.

g A flood of *water, like a river.*] Perhaps this is one of *the artifices* which these enormous creatures make use of to *beat down* their prety, when flying from them; though I cannot, at present, remember any passage that illustrates it.

h *The earth assisted the woman*, &c.] This may intimate, that notwithstanding all the violent and cruel attempts of Satan, and of those persecuting powers whom he instigates, God will raise up some persons, (and perhaps, as Mr. Lowman observes, it may mean, some persons of power and authority in the world, to protect his *witnesses*, and secure many of those who faithfully retain the testimony of Jesus; and to prevent pure religion from being entirely overborne and lost. And this has been, in fact, the case in many nations; and particularly in this,

SECT. XV.

rent as he seemed to have intended it should. *And the dragon was enraged against the woman,* to see all his efforts against her defeated by a superior power; *and* he *went away* to excite new troubles, and *to make war* against the woman, and *against the remainder of her seed,* even as many as might by any means be brought within his reach; nor did he spare any of those *who keep the commandments of God* inviolable, *and* have the courage to *retain,* at the greatest expence or hazard, *the testimony of Jesus Christ* in his pure uncorrupted gospel.

Rev. XII. 17.

which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHATEVER concealed and unknown wonders may be intimated in *some* parts of this grand and awful vision, in *others* it contains very obvious and important instructions.—While we are beholding this emblematical representation of the *Christian*
Ver. *church,* let us adore the great original *Sun of righteousness,* who
1, 2 has decked her with his glorious beams, and will at length cause every faithful member of this blessed society, to *shine forth as the Sun in his Father's kingdom.* And let us be desirous of treading this changeable and uncertain world *under our feet.* Let us thankfully own the hand which has crowned the church with the *apostles,* as with a *diadem;* and taught by their precepts, and inspired by their example, let us prepare ourselves for that sacred
7 *war,* to which we are called, the war against *the devil,* and his *confederate hosts.* It is indeed, under a very formidable type, that he is here represented:—His cruelty, his subtility, his experience in all the arts of destruction, are painted out with dread-
3 ful propriety, in the *old serpent,* the *great dragon;* but formidable as his violence, or artful and potent as the confederacy of infernal spirits may be, here is a *victory* gained over him, which
9 calls for the congratulation of all the *armies of the Lord: the dra-*
10 *gon and his angels, are cast out;* the saints are enabled to triumph over him, feeble and impotent as they are. But in what way are they able to overcome him. *It is by the blood of the Lamb,*
11 *and by the word of their testimony.* Instructive and edifying admonition! Let this be our confidence, even the *banner of the cross,* the blood of the Saviour, who died upon it; and, in this *signal,* we shall come off conquerors too; *faith* in him shall be our *shield;* the *word of God* shall be our *sword,* the *sword of the spirit:* and *Satan,* thus *resisted,* shall *flee before us,* (James iv. 7.) In vain are the *floods of temptation,* which he may attempt to *throw*

throw out of his mouth, to debauch our principles, or practices; they shall be entirely *swallowed up.* And though the church be for a while in the *wilderness,* it shall be happily sheltered, and tenderly *nourished;* there its *members* shall be in safety, as if they were *taken up to God: even unto his throne,* till the time which he has appointed for its triumph. In the mean while, however the sons of *malice,* under the instruction and influence of the great *accuser of the brethren,* may defame them; however *persecution* may attack and harrass them; let them be courageous and undaunted, not *loving their lives even to the death;* in the cause of Christ; for, though *they fall, they shall rise again* to certain victory and glory; nor shall death bring down their heads so low, as to render them unworthy of wearing *a crown of eternal life.*

SECT. XV. 15, 16 5 10

SECT. XVI.

The vision of the two beasts, and the outrages committed by them. Rev. XIII. *throughout.*

Rev. XIII. 1. AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

REVELATION XIII. 1.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, as I apprehended in the vision, *and saw a* fierce and *savage-beast*[a] *ascending out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns;* to intimate the city of Rome standing upon seven hills, and the ten kingdoms into which its dominions were to be divided: *and upon his horns* [*were*] *ten diadems;* to signify the royal power that was to be found in each; *and on his heads* [*there were*] *names of blasphemy*[b]; such names as it was most profane and blasphemous to assume.

SECT. xvi. Rev. XIII. 1.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his

And the beast which I saw, was, as to the form of the greater part of its body, *like a leopard, and its feet* [*were*] *like those of a bear,* to signify its exceeding great fierceness; *and its mouth*

2

a *Savage beast.*] This I understand of the *papal power,* as exercised by the *bishop of Rome,* supported by his *regular clergy* and by those secular princes, who have given up their name and power to him. And when the *dragon* is said to *give him his power and throne,* &c. ver. 2. it intimates, that he should have his seat or residence there, where the *dragon* had reigned even at Rome; which had been the seat of idolatry and persecution during its pagan state.

b *Names of blasphemy.*] They must have very little acquaintance with the *arrogant titles,* which have been assumed or admitted by the pope, who discern not in them a very remarkable illustration of *this* circumstance of the *prophecy.* —Instead ονομα, the common reading, I think ονοματα, *names,* in the *plural,* which is supposed by the authority of the Alexandrian, and other manuscripts, to be preferable.

c Never

SECT. XVI.

Rev. XIII. 2.

mouth was *like the mouth of a* roaring and furious *lion: and the dragon*, who still appeared on the visionary scene, that is, the devil, *gave him*, by solemn delegation, *his power, and his throne, and great authority* in his kingdom; so that this beast seemed to be constituted his vicegerent; however he might pretend to represent a very different person.

his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 *And I saw one of his heads wounded, as it were, to death*; that is, in such a manner, that a recovery seemed impossible; to signify those early efforts, which should be made, to put a stop to the usurpation, cruelties, and blasphemy represented by these heads, and the names written on them. *And yet its mortal wound*, as one would have thought it must have proved, *was* unaccountably *healed. And the whole earth wondered* at so strange an event, [*and*] they [*followed*] *after the wild beast*, thinking a greater argument of its extraordinary power arose from its cure, than could have taken place, had he never been wounded at all[c]. *And they*, that is the inhabitants of the earth, *worshipped the dragon, who gave* his *authority to the wild beast: and they worshipped the wild beast*, even as with God-like adoration, *saying, Who*, that pretends to Deity in heaven, or earth, [*is*] *like unto the beast?* or *who can* ever presume to *make war against him*, since his power is so well established, without hazard of immediate or certain destruction? *And there was given to it*, that is, to this monster, *a mouth, speaking great things, and blasphemies*, as with a human voice; to signify that it was influenced by that being, who assuming the form and organs of a brute, had used the power of speech for the most mischievous purposes. *And there was* also *given unto it power to make war*[d] with the saints with some apparent advantage, for the term above-mentioned, of *forty-two months*; that is, one

3 And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

c Never been wounded at all.] It is certain *that ineffectual efforts*, to recover the liberty and purity of the church, have sometimes been improved into occasions of further *usurpations*, and many have been intimidated by them from making any further attempts. Yet they are not entirely destitute of their good effects, as they at least deliver *the souls* of those who have exerted their utmost ability in making them; and may *afterwards* be productive of better fruits and consequences.

d *Power to make war*: πολεμον ποιησαι.] Our *translators* have followed those *copies*, which omit the word πολεμον, and have rendered ποιησαι *continue*; a sense which it must be owned, it sometimes bears, particularly, Acts xv. 33; xx. 3. but I have chosen to rely on those *copies* which retain the word πολεμον. See ver. 7.

e *Those*

one thousand twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years. *And he opened his* infernal *mouth to utter blasphemy against God*, even *to blaspheme his* holy and venerable *name, and his tabernacle* pitched among men; *and* not only did he speak malignant things against the inhabitants of the earth, but even against *those that dwell in heaven*[e]. (Compare Dan. xi. 36.) *And it was*, by Divine permission, *given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them* for a time; *and* so universal was the success of his pernicious undertakings, that it seemed, as if *there was given to him power over every tribe, and tongue, and nation. And all the inhabitants of the earth* shall be so deluded with his artifices, or intimidated by his terrors, that they *shall worship him*[f], that is, all *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, who was slain*, for some were registered in that book even *from the foundation of the world*[g]: and they shall, by a secret energy, be preserved in the midst of so general and ruinous a defection. *If any one has an ear* to hear, *let him* attentively *hear* this; for it is a matter of a most important nature, and the most surprising phænomenon which can be imagined, that such an idolatrous and persecuting power should arise in the Christian church, and that God should suffer it so far to prevail. Nevertheless, God will not forget the injuries his people

SECT. XVI.

Rev. XIII. 6.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into

e *Those that dwell in heaven.*] It is very injurious to the *saints* and *angels*, when they are represented as desirous of attracting to themselves that *worship* which ought to be appropriated to God; and nothing worse can be imagined of them, than that they should be delighted with such services as are paid them in the Romish ritual.

f *The inhabitants of the earth shall worship him.*] The extravagant *idolatry* here mentioned, is very suitable to the *temper* and *practice* of those, who in order to avoid persecution, comply with the claims and demands of the *papal* power, contrary to their conscience; for it is the language of such a compliance, that the *wrath of men* is more to be dreaded than that *of God himself*.

g Registered *from the foundation of the world.*] I am well aware of what has been said to justify the sense which these words must have, if taken in *connection* with those which immediately precede them; but, after all, it is very harsh to say, *Christ was slain from the foundation of the world.* He is in another place called simply, *the Lamb slain*, Rev. v. 12. and a kingdom is said to be prepared for good men *from the foundation of the world*, Mat. xxv. 34. And, laying these things together, I think it abundantly sufficient to justify the interpretation I have here given, especially when compared with another *passage* in this book, chap. xvii. 8. *whose names were not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world. Mr. Pierce* thinks it is an allusion to the custom of *registering* the actions of *worthy persons*, as Mal. iii. 17, undoubtedly is; and, that *this book of life* is, as it were, the *catalogue* of good men that have lived in all ages. *Pierce on* Phil. iv. 3. But I cannot be of opinion, that this exhausts the *full meaning* of the expression.

h *Another*

SECT. XVI.

people sustain; but, *if any one lead* [*them*] *into captivity, he shall be led into captivity* himself by a superior power, which he shall not be able to resist; and, *if any one slay* others *with the sword* of injustice and cruelty, *he shall himself be slain with the sword* of Divine vengeance, when God comes to make inquisition for blood. In the mean time, while they are waiting for his appearance, *here is* a sufficient exercise for *the patience and the faith of the saints:* it is the greatest trial to which they were ever brought; let them therefore consider themselves as called out by God to it, and be assured that he will limit it both as to its duration and degree, in a manner answerable to the purposes of his infinite wisdom, and of his peculiar love to them.

Rev. XIII. 10.

into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 *And*, to represent a very crafty and insidious power, which should join with the former, and greatly abet its sanguinary persecutions, *I saw another beast*[h] *ascending out of the earth*[i]; *and it had two horns like a lamb; but*, whatever gentleness there might be in that circumstance 12 of its appearance, *it spake like a dragon. And* such is the nature of their alliance, that *it exercises all the power of the first beast, in its presence; and it makes the earth, and those that dwell in it, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed*, whose interest, which seemed so much endangered, was greatly revived, being thus powerfully abetted and supported. 13 *And he*, in order to confirm his subtle pretences, to lord it over the consciences of men, *does great miracles*[k], *so as* even *to make fire come down from heaven to earth before men;* strange artifices he has, to persuade them of his being endowed with more than natural powers, and that the vengeance of heaven will be armed 14 against all that oppose him! *And he deceiveth the inhabitants of the earth by the signs which*

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth: and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by *the means of* those

h *Another beast.*] As I look upon the former to be the *papal power*, I am ready, with the best critics I know, to interpret this of the *religious orders* of the *church of Rome*, (particularly that of the Jesuits,) who have many of them *temporal* estates and jurisdictions added to their spiritual, and *thus* have greatly supported the papacy.

i *Out of the earth.*] This beast is said to ascend *from the earth*, whereas the other ascended *from the sea*, to make the *distinction* between them the more remarkable; but what other mystery may be suggested, I cannot conjecture.

k *Great miracles.*] The *artful impostures*, which the *regular clergy*, that is, the several orders of monks, and especially the Jesuits, have used to persuade the people of the truth of their pretended miracles and revelations, seem to be finely delineated by this otherwise *amazing* description.

those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast: saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right-hand, or in their foreheads.

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a

which it is given him to do before the beast; commanding the inhabitants of the earth to make an image of the beast, that had the wound of the sword, and yet *lived;* that is, he teaches men to extol, and almost adore, that which in itself is most contemptible and detestable. *And it was given to him,* by a Divine permission, *to give* spirit and *breath,* as it were, *to the image of the beast*[l], *that the image of the beast might speak* with an audible voice. *And,* so zealous and powerful is he in abetting this cause, that by this its oracle, he should *cause as many as will not worship the image of the beast, to be put to death.* *And he causeth all,* of every rank and condition, *both small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to receive the mark* of this detestable power, *on their right-hand, or their foreheads,* in token of becoming its subjects and property. *And,* so rigorously is this enforced, *that no one should be able to buy, or sell, but one who has* some such trace of *the mark*[m], *or the name of the beast, or the number,* which is equivalent to the numeral letters *of his name,* and which I thought, in the vision, I saw impressed on the hands and foreheads of many. *Herein is* a great effort of *wisdom; let him,* therefore, whoever he be, *who hath* an enlarged and penetrating *understanding,* beyond what is common, *compute the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man*[n], or the numeral letters

SECT. XVI.

Rev. XIII. 14. 15 16 17 18

l *Image of the beast.*] What *the image of the beast* is, distinct from the *beast itself,* I confess I know not; and therefore interpret the expressions, *making an image, and giving it breath,* &c. of *idolizing* the power of the Pope, and compelling persons to pay homage to it, and obey the edicts it published. And all the enormous *fury* of the *inquisition,* which is managed by one of the *regular orders* included in this interpretation, namely, the *Dominican,* is a remarkable verification of the following part of the *prophecy,* of its *causing all that would not worship it to be put to death.*

m *Receive the mark.*] I have elsewhere observed, *(Serm. to Young People, Serm.* iv. that it was customary to *mark soldiers* and *slaves* with some impressions, either on their *hands* or *foreheads,* by which they might be known to belong to their respective *masters* or *commanders*; and *idolaters,* with the signature of *the god* they worshipped. Perhaps this may particularly refer to the *sacraments* which the people are obliged, on the highest penalty, to receive from the *Romish priests,* and which none can receive without such *superstitious* and *idolatrous* rites, as are in effect, *worshipping the image of the beast.*

n *The number of a man,* &c.] Of all the various *interpretations* given to this text, which it would be endless to enumerate, and much more to canvas, I find none that pleases me so well, as that of Sir Isaac Newton; that the words λατεινος and רומית, *the man of Latium,* or of Rome, whose *numeral letters,* taken together, make 666, are here referred to. And I suppose this number is mentioned to signify, that the *appearance of that power,* whose efforts were to continue 1260 *years,* (compare chap. xii. 6, note d,) was to happen about 666 *years* after the date of the *revelations,* A. D. 96. And this I take to be the *grand key* by which the *æra*

of

SECT. XVI.

Rev. XIII. 18.

ters in the name of a man, *and his number is,* and amounts on the whole, to *six hundred* and *sixty-six;* which I leave to the intelligent reader to decypher.

a man; and his number is six hundred threescore *and* six.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6, 7, 10, 8, 17, 11, 13, 14, 12

WHOEVER is the *beast* intended, and whatever be meant by *his image*, his *character*, beyond all controversy, is very odious and detestable; for he is represented as *blaspheming the name of God, and his tabernacle, and as making war with the saints.* There have arisen such impious monsters in the *Christian* church, and none among them have been more openly and enormously wicked and profane, than those who have made the loudest pretensions to be the *vicegerents of Christ*, and invested with his whole authority. Many of the *saints* of God have seemed to have been *overcome* by this *antichristian* tyranny; many have been *led into captivity;* many have been *slain with the sword:* but those who took them *captive*, continuing impenitent, shall be *taken*, and the *slayers slain.* O, may our *names be written in the Lamb's book of life!* then shall we be secure in the midst of all these formidable evils; and from every trial of our *faith* and *patience*, shall come out *as gold seven times purified.*—Let us not be troubled and offended, to discern these *usurpations* in the course of Divine Providence prevailing, and the time actually come, in many parts of the world, in which men can neither *buy* nor *sell*, nor are permitted to enjoy any other *natural* or *civil* privileges, if they will not *give up their names to the beast, receive his mark*, and implicitly submit to his authority. The *prophecy* justly removes all *offence* which might be taken at the *event;* and discerning its accomplishment, we may embolden our hopes, that the triumphs of Divine justice over these ministers of the *dragon*, as they are also *foretold*, will be *fulfilled* with the like punctuality. And O, may the church of God be secured from their *artifices*, and fortified against their *terrors;* and in his own due time, may he *break the jaw-bone of the wicked!* May he utterly disarm all the power and policy of those who *take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed;* and though their confederacies may seem to mock all

of the *fall of Babylon* is to be calculated, as it fixes *the rise of the beast* to the *year* 756, or thereabouts, when, upon the destruction of the exarchate of Ravenna, the Pope became a *temporal monarch;* that is, in prophetic language, *a beast.* See many other conjectures in *Limborch's Theol.* 7. xi. 19. Mr. Potter thinks the *number* referred to is the *cube root of* 666, namely, 25, (which has led Dr. *More* to fix upon *number* 12, relating to the church of Christ, and *number* 25, relating to antichrist;) and concludes further, that the *exact cube* is not mentioned, to prevent too sudden a discovery. Compare *More's Theol.* p. 134. Grotius referring it to Trajan is very ungrounded in every view.

all human opposition, yet at his appearance, they shall melt away as snow before the sun, when the time *to remember Sion, yea, the set time is come.* (Psal. cii. 13.) SECT. XVI.

SECT. XVII.

The vision of the Lamb standing upon mount Sion, surrounded with those whom he had redeemed; and of several mighty angels, proclaiming his vengeance upon the beast, and upon those that worship him. Rev. XIV. 1, *throughout.*

Rev. XIV. 1. AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Revelation XIV. 1.

SECT. XVII. Rev. XIV. 1.

AND, while these terrible objects were before me, *I looked*, and beheld another object, which animated my heart under the alarm *and* distress they gave me: for *behold, the Lamb was standing upon mount Sion*, which was represented to me also in my vision, as the place on which the temple, that had been opened in heaven stood; *and with him* were *one hundred forty four thousand, who* in opposition to the name of the beast, which was so rigorously imposed, and by many received with so base a submission, *had the name of* God *his Father written on their foreheads*, in token of their inviolable submission, and entire dedication to him. *And I* 2 *heard a voice out of heaven*, which was loud *as the sound of many waters*, when tossing themselves in the ocean, *and like the sound of great thunder;* and, loud *and* awful as it was, it was accompanied with a most delightful harmony; for *I heard the voice of harpers playing upon their harps*, aiding their instruments with the melody of their voices. *And they sung, as it* 3 *were, a new song, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the* twenty-four *elders*, who in this vision still appeared to be present; *and none could learn the song, unless the one hundred and forty-four thousand, who are redeemed from the earth*, and are as representatives of the whole body of the redeemed. *These are* pure and unspotted souls, free from 4 the idolatries and other abominations which have been so prevalent in the age in which they live; or to speak in the prophetic language, these are *they who have not been polluted with women:*

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they

SECT. XVII.

Rev. XIV. 4.

women: for they are chaste *virgins*[a]: *these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*; and having humbly traced his footsteps upon earth, shall be led by him to the possession of various and ever-new delights in the celestial world. *These* are they, who *were redeemed from among men*, [*as*] *the first-fruits*, consecrated *to God, and to the Lamb*; most excellent in their kind, and separate from every unclean or profane use, to the immediate honour of God, and of their Redeemer[b]. *And no deceit*, or evil of any kind, *was found in their mouth, for they are* entirely *blameless before the throne of God*, and exalted to that world, where he reigns in perfect purity, as well as Divine glory, nor can any thing unclean be admitted in his presence.

they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, *being* the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 *And I saw another* glorious *angel, flying* with strength and rapidity, *through the midst of heaven*[c], *having* in his hand the volume of a book, which he displayed, as with an air of complacency and triumph, even *the everlasting gospel, to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, even to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people*, dispersed over the world. And as he passed, I heard him making proclamation of its important contents, and *saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him*, with becoming reverence and submission, *for the hour of his judgment his come*, when he shall execute vengeance on his enemies, *and worship him who made heaven and earth, and sea, and the* limpid *fountains of waters*, which are derived from it, and flow back into it. *And another* great *angel followed* him, crying out, as with the voice of exultation and triumph, *saying, It is fallen, it is fallen*, [*even*] *Babylon, the great city*, a city famous as Babylon of old, when it was at the height of its power and glory. God in his righteous vengeance hath brought it down, *because it made all the nations drink of the wine of its raging*

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

7 Saying, with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine

a *They are virgins.*] This probably signifies their *freedom* from *idolatry*, which is, in a *spiritual* sense, *fornication*; nor can it, with any reason, be urged against marriage.

b *First-fruits*, most excellent in their kind, &c.] That the *Jewish first-fruits*, had this property, will appear from comparing the following *texts* relating to them; Deut. xviii. 4; Exod. xxii. 29; Numb. xviii. 12; Micah vii. 1. Compare James i. 18.

c *Angel flying*, &c.] The *flight of an angel* admirably represents the *swiftness* of that progress by which the *gospel* dispersed itself over the whole world, as Archbishop *Tillotson* well observes. See his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 144.

d *Or*

wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are*

raging fornication, till they were stimulated thereby to the most scandalous and furious excesses. *And a third angel followed them* both, *saying, with a loud voice, If any one*, how strong soever the temptation may have been, *worship the beast, and his image, and receive the mark on his forehead, or on his hand*[d]; if he subject himself to this wicked and idolatrous form of religion, and obstinately persist in it, notwithstanding the light which God is giving to discover its errors and superstition; *He also shall* himself, *drink of the wine of the indignation of God, which is tempered* with various ingredients of wrath, *without* any *mixture* of mercy, *in the cup of his wrath; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone*, in the day of God's future vengeance, *in the presence of the holy angels*[e] *and in the presence of the Lamb*[f]; whose religion has so shamefully been perverted and dishonoured, even by those who pretend entirely to have engrossed it: *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever*, without any period; *and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever*, in contempt of the authority and testimony of God, *receive the mark of his name*[g], as the badge of their devotedness to him. In the mean time, these deceivers shall have their day, when all the terrors of secular power shall inforce their impious and iniquitous decrees. And *here is the patience of the saints; here* [*are*] the triumphs of *those who keep the commandments*

SECT. xvii.

Rev. XIV. 9.

10

11

12

d *On his hand.*] Compare *sect.* xvi. note m.

e *Presence of the holy angels.*] From hence Mr. *Reynolds* conjectures, that possibly the torments of the damned may, at certain seasons, through eternal ages, become a spectacle to the inhabitants of the blessed world above. See his *Queries concerning angels*, p. 305.

f *Presence of the Lamb.*] This signifies (as Dr. *Clarke* well observes,) that it shall not only be appointed by the infinite Majesty of God, the righteous Judge of all, but approved moreover by *men* and *angels*, and by him also, who *loved us* unto death, even Christ, that *merciful* and *compassionate High-Priest. Clarke's Posth. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 341.

g *The smoke of their torment—who worship the beast*, &c.] When I seriously reflect on *this text*, and how directly the force of it lies against those, who, contrary to the light of their consciences, continue in the *communion* of the *church of* Rome, for *secular* advantage, or to avoid the terror of *persecution*, it almost makes me tremble; and I heartily wish, that all others, who connive at those things in the *discipline* and *worship* of *protestant churches*, which they, in their conscience, think to be *sinful* remains of popish superstition and corruption, would seriously attend to this passage, which is one of the most *dreadful* in the whole book of God, and weigh its awful contents, that they may keep at the greatest possible distance from this horrible curse, which is sufficient to *make the ears of every one that hears it, to tingle.* Compare Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

h *Hence-*

SECT. XVII.

ments of God, and the faith of Jesus, and are determined to maintain the purity of the gospel amidst these formidable efforts to corrupt it.

Rev. XIV. 13. *And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write* this for the instruction of mankind in the most distant ages: *henceforth*[h] *blessed* [*are*] *the dead, that die in the Lord*[i]: so numerous, and so various are the calamities which the persecuting powers shall bring upon the saints, that there is abundant reason to congratulate those who are taken out of this vexatious, oppressive, and afflictive world, whether by a natural, or by a violent death: *yea, saith the Spirit*, by whose inspiration and command I recorded it, they are assuredly blessed; for they are removed, *that they may* for ever *rest from their labours*, and their sorrows; *and their works* of piety and goodness, though so ill requited here, shall not be forgotten, but shall *follow them* into the presence of God, shall be acknowledged there in the most condescending manner, and through the riches of Divine mercy, recompensed with eternal glory. Accordingly, let this remembrance of their faith and patience, in connection with this transcendent reward, encourage and animate their surviving brethren to imitate their examples.

are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

14 *And I saw, and behold*, another remarkable appearance offered itself to my view; *a white cloud*, shining with wonderful lustre and beauty; *and on the cloud one sitting*, who seemed by the majesty of his form, to be *like the Son of man*, as represented in Daniel; *having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand*, instead of a sceptre, *a sharp sickle*: so that he seemed to be going forth, as to some wonderful harvest.

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud; and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 *And* as soon as I had viewed him, *another angel came out of the temple* of God, *crying, with a loud voice to him that sate upon the cloud, Put forth thy sickle, and reap, for the season of thy reaping*

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in

h *Henceforth*] The learned *Witsius* understands this to mean, from the time of their death: as if it had been said, (αναυλι) *immediately* after their dissolution they are *blessed*. *Wits. Oecon. Fœd.* 3. xiv. 21. And Mr. Baxter observes, their works are said *to follow with them*, μετ αυλων, not to come many thousand years *after* them.

i *Die in the Lord.*] Archbishop *Tillotson* interprets this chiefly of those who die *martyrs* in the cause of Christ; who, no doubt, are included. But I think the phrase more extensive. There is, perhaps, an allusion to the words of Solomon, Eccl. iv. 2, *I praised the dead already dead, rather than the living, yet alive*, in time of extreme degeneracy, and bitter persecution. See his *Works*, Vol. II. page 183.—Bishop *Burnet*, (*on the Articles*, p. 200.) and many other *protestant* writers, have justly urged this text, as *demonstrative* against the popish doctrine of purgatory.

k *One*

in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle, into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horses bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

reaping is come because the harvest of the earth is now fully *ripe.* (Compare Joel iii. 13,) Execute therefore this judgment, O thou mighty Messenger of God, which the wickedness of the world hath righteously deserved. *And,* accordingly, *he that sate upon the cloud, put forth his sickle on the earth,* with strength and rapidity; *and* the harvest of *the earth was* presently *reaped;* signifying, that the execution of the threatened vengeance should be very speedy. But it seemed that the vintage yet remained to be gathered in. *And,* in reference to this, *another angel came out of the temple, that was in heaven: and he* also was armed as the other, like the Son of man, and *had a sharp sickle* in his hand. *And another angel,* just at that instant, *came from the altar, having,* as it seemed, *power over the fire* of it; *and he called out with a great cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, Put forth thy sharp sickle, and lop off the clusters of the vine,* which grows *upon,* and extends itself almost over *the earth, for its grapes are ripe;* and the persons represented by it have so abused the Divine long suffering, that it is proper the season of their destruction should commence. *And* accordingly *the angel,* with celerity and vigour, *thrust out his sickle upon the earth, and lopped off* the grapes from *the vine of the earth; and he threw* [*them*] *into the great wine-press, of the wrath of God,* which seemed to stand ready to receive them. *And the wine-press* [*which stood*] *out of the city, was trodden* with great violence; *and the blood* of the grape, which I knew betokened the blood of those who were enemies to God and his people, *came out of the wine-press* in such abundance, that it made a kind of inundation, like a vast river, or sea, and reached up *even to the bridles of the horses,* which attempted to pass the channel through which it flowed, *at the distance of one thousand six hundred furlongs*[k]. In such an amazing

SECT. XVII.

Rev. XIV. 15.

16 17 18 19 20

k *One thousand six hundred furlongs.*] As a *furlong* is one eight of a *mile,* this would amount to 200 *miles.* This representation, like the dimensions of that *temple,* which Ezekiel saw, may seem extravagantly large, and such as the eye, in vision could not possibly judge of. I look upon it, therefore, as only an *hyperbolical* expression, to signify its *exceeding greatness*; unless possibly it may point out the dimension of that country over which the judgment should extend, which is here prophetically referred to. Though perhaps it may only intimate in general that

SECT. XVII.

amazing extent and quantity was the effusion of blood represented to me in vision. (Compare Isa. lxiii. 3.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 15--20 In what awful characters is the righteous vengeance of God here described! How quickly do his haughtiest enemies fall before him, like corn before the sickle, or *clusters of grapes* before the *knife! His wine-press shall* indeed be trodden, and the *blood* of his enemies shall overflow; but *blessed are all they that put their trust in him*, and look to him, who *trod the wine-press alone*, and who distinguishes himself by the title of him, who is *mighty to save, and who travels in the greatness of his strength.* (Isa. lxiii. 1 1—3.) Arrayed in terror, he will vanquish all the enemies of his people; but, to his faithful followers, will appear with the gentleness of the Lamb, of the Lamb their *Redeemer*, to whose honour *their voices* and *their harps* shall resound. O, how happy 3, 4 are those souls, who by his special love, *being redeemed from among men*, and having humbly traced the steps of his purity and goodness on earth, shall, in the heavenly world, *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes!* Let us be accordingly engaged to preserve ourselves unspotted from the world, and to walk worthy of so ex- 5 alted a hope and expectation; to keep our *mouths from every deceit*, that we may be *found blameless* in the presence of God, and 6, 7 of the Lamb. God hath granted us the everlasing gospel, on purpose that we might be taught to *fear him, and to give glory* to his 8--10 name; to *worship him*, as the great Creator and righteous Governor of the universe: and while we are under the conduct of his Providence, and devoted to his service, let nothing discourage or dismay us. Though for the present we see that *Babylon is triumphant*, though its patrons are *making themselves drunk with the blood* of his saints, a very *different cup* is prepared for her, and will assuredly be given her to drink, even the *cup of the wrath of God, poured forth without mixture;* while blessings, inconceivable and eternal, are reserved for those that *suffer for righteousness* 11 *sake.* Let the patience, therefore, of those who *keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Christ*, be invincible; for their fiercest, and most formidable enemies, can only kill the body; and having done that, can neither prevent, nor delay, *the blessedness of*

that after the antichristian powers had long oppressed and persecuted the saints; the power of Christ should humble and destroy them; and therefore they are represented as a *harvest ripe, and fit for reaping*, &c. the measure of their iniquities being full.

a *Sea*

of the dead that die in the Lord. The infallible *Spirit has said it,* the blessed apostle hath, by Divine command, recorded it, for the instruction and triumph of his people in all ages, that *they rest from their labours, and that their works follow them;* while those that persecuted and hated them, *rest not day nor night; but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.* And, O, that numbers of those who *worship the beast; and who receive its image,* may be awakened, while the day of their visitation continues; lest they also, after having dealt damnation, in their arrogant censures, upon men of much purer faith, and holier lives, than themselves, *be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.*

SECT. XVII. Ver. 11, 9, 10

SECT. XVIII.

The appearance of seven angels, with seven vials, full of the seven last plagues; and the pouring out of the three first vials, with their consequent effects. Rev. XV. 1. *to the end,* XVI. 7.

Rev. XV. 1.
AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous; seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Revelation XV. 1.

SECT. XVIII. Rev. XV. 1.

AND I saw another great and wonderful sign in heaven, which fixed my attention, and will demand that of the reader; *Seven angels, who had the seven last plagues:* so called, *because in them the wrath of God was to be completed;* and, because they refer to some of the last judgments, which he shall pour forth on the enemies of the church, before the time of its most illustrious triumph. *And I saw, as it were a sea of glass*[a] a great crystal vessel, like the sea in Solomon's temple; and it was so irradiated with the reflection of that light which fell upon it from the throne of God, that its waves seem *mingled with fire. And those who overcame the beast*[b], *and his image, and* stedfastly

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand

2

a *Sea of Glass.*] Some explain this in a different manner, as if there were properly *a sea,* seeming to lie before the ground which appeared in the vision, through which they had passed who now stood upon the shore of it; and they suppose *the glass* to represent the *frail nature* of this world; and *the fire,* the mixture of calamity and misery to which they had been exposed, before they arrived at the state of security and happiness in which they then were. Many other interpretations have also been given. But the consideration of what I have said elsewhere, of the reference *to the scenery of the temple,* determined me to the interpretation I have preferred.

b *Overcame the beast.*] It is, in the original, ἐκ τῆς θηρίου, which Dr. Clark would translate, *out of the midst of the beast,* that, is, adhering stedfastly to the true religion, in the midst of an idolatrous and corrupt nation. See his *Posth. Serm.* Vol. III. p. 86.

c *Song*

SECT. XVIII.

Rev. XV. 2.

stedfastly refused, though at the expence of their possessions and lives, amidst so many who were devoted to him, to receive *his mark*; [*and*] *the number of his name*, I saw *standing by the sea of glass, having the harps of God* in their hands, with which they were celebrating his praises, for that powerful presence and assistance which had rendered them victorious. *And they sung the song of Moses, the* faithful and beloved *servant of God, and the song of* Jesus, *the Lamb*, who had bought them with his blood [c]. They celebrated the triumph they had gained over the proud enemy, with a joy, like that with which Israel of old, at the Red Sea, celebrated the destruction of the haughty and cruel Egyptians, by the immediate and glorious interposition of the Divine power, *saying*, "*Great and wonderful* [*are*] *thy works*, both of judgment and of mercy, *O Lord God Almighty*; nor dost thou use thine almighty power to oppress any, the meanest of thy creatures; on the contrary, perfectly *righteous and true* [*are*] all *thy ways* and administrations, *O King of saints*, who art thyself supremely holy, as well as powerful. *Who should not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy* great and adorable *name? because* [*thou*] *only* [*art*] *holy*; and in thy presence, the holiness of all other beings disappears, as unworthy to be mentioned or remembered. *Surely all nations shall come and worship before thee*, in token of the humblest adoration, *because thy righteous judgments are* already in many instances, *made manifest*, and are about to be manifested in a yet more illustrious degree."

And after this I saw; and behold the temple of the tabernacle, in which was the ark *of the testimony*, *was opened* again *in heaven*: the most holy place, which since the vision I before described, had been veiled again, being now subjected to my view. *And the seven angels, who had the seven plagues* already mentioned, *came*

stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that, I looked and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven

c *Song of Moses——and of the Lamb.*] That is, saith Mr. Mede, upon the conversion of all nations from *idolatry*, they sung a *song* of congratulation to Moses and Jesus, whose doctrine had so directly opposed it. Mede on Luke xi. 2. But I think this a very *low interpretation*. Whoever diligently observes the contents of *the song of Moses*, Exod. xv. will find many expressions finely adapted to the occasion here supposed. And if it were true, as Maimonides tells us, that *the song of Moses* was sung *daily* in the *temple-service*, it may be considered as a beautiful illustration of this circumstance, agreeable to the *general plan* pursued in these visions.

d And

seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

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Rev. XV. 6.

came out of the inner apartment of *the temple*, as from the immediate presence of God; and like the High Priest on the day of his most sacred ministration, they were *clothed with pure and shining linen* [*garments*;] only with this difference, that whereas he had on this day only his linen girdle on, *and* continued in that dress till the time of the evening sacrifice, they *were girded about the breasts with golden girdles.*

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

7 *And one of the four living creatures*, which I have so often mentioned, *gave to the seven angels, seven golden vials*, or censers, *full of the wrath of* the great and blessed *God, who liveth for ever and ever;* and, therefore, is to be regarded as the most formidable enemy, as well as the most desirable friend, to immortal beings.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

8 *And*, agreeably to that wonderful event, which happened when God first took possession of the tabernacle, and of the temple, (Exod. xl. 34; 1 Kings viii. 10; 2 Chron. v. 14; Isa. vi. 4;) *the temple was full of smoke*[d]; which came *from the glory of God, and from* the symbol of *his power. And no one could enter into the temple, till the seven plagues*, which were signified by the vials *of the seven angels, were finished;* and, till they had emptied them by the Divine command.

CHAP. XVI. 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

Chap. XVI. 1.

And I then *heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels*, whom I have described above, *Go, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God*, with which you are charged, *upon the earth;* for his patience will no longer endure the provocations they are intended to punish.

2 And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

2 *And the first* angel, in obedience to this Divine injunction, *went forth, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there was a malignant and grievous ulcer*, which broke out in large and dreadful scars, *upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and them who worshipped his image*, and they were extremely tormented with it, and found it incurable. (Compare Exod. ix. 8—10[e].)

And

d And agreeable to that wonderful event, &c.] Indeed it appears most surprising, and worthy of greater notice than has generally been taken of it, that the blessed God should thus, on the consecration of the temple, possess it *alone*, and drive out, as it were, even the favourable *tokens* of his majestic presence,

e *First vial.*] Mr. Lowman supposes, that this *third* period of the *vials*, reveals the state of the church and providence in the times of the last head of the Roman government, represented by the *beast*, for 1260 years, from about A. D. 756, to its final overthrow about A. D. 2016; and he interprets each vial of some signal judgmen

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Rev. XVI. 3. *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became* a mass of *blood* and putrefaction, *like that of a dead man; and every living soul* [*that was*] *in the sea died;* the fish were immediately destroyed, and the sea appeared a most gloomy and terrible spectacle[f]. (Compare Exod. vii. 20)

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 *And the third angel* bore a commission to spread the same terrible calamity over all the fresh waters; and accordingly he *poured forth his vial on the rivers, and on the fountains of water, and they* also *became blood;* as the sea had done on pouring out the vial of the former angel. 5 *And I heard the angel of the waters*[g], who seemed to be appointed to have the care of them, instead of repining at what was done, adoring the hand of God in it, and *saying*, Most *righteous art thou, O Lord, who art, and who wast*, the same immutable and everlasting Jehovah; *and* [*thou art*] *holy*[h], *because thou hast judged these*, and executed such awful vengeance upon them. 6 Justly dost thou make these persecuting and wicked countries the scene of such desolating judgments; *because they have poured forth the blood of* thy *saints, and* even of thy *prophets*, like water; and it hath flowed in a crimson stream, till their rivers have been dyed with it. *And*, accordingly, *thou* madest them read their crime in their punishment, and *hast given*

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be; because thou hast judged thus:

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

judgment upon the papal kingdom; supposing the five first already to be poured out, and the two others to be future. But, I must own myself not to be entirely satisfied, whether this supposition be just, (though I am rather inclined to think it is,) or whether all the following representations do not refer to events yet future, and describe the supernatural plagues to be inflicted on the papal kingdom, in its last days. Mr. Pyle interprets the first *vial*, of the abandoned degeneracy of the popish clergy. Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers it to the great commotions in the whole empire, under the family of Charles the Great; by which that family became extinct, and the empire and the crown of France, were transferred to other families: A. D. 830, to A. D. 988. And he shews by what intrigues the popes endeavoured to weaken and diminish the imperial power, and serve their own ambitious designs; which proved a painful *sore*, and were the cause of innumerable mischiefs to Europe, and especially to Italy. During this period, the Normans invaded and plundered France, the Saracens ravaged Italy, and the Hungarians the western parts of Germany and Italy.

f *Second vial.*] Mr. Pyle, and Mr. Lowman, agree in referring this to the great effusion of blood in the holy wars, to recover Jerusalem from the Saracens. This romantic project was set on foot by the pope, pursued by the *emperor*, the king of France, our king Richard, and other princes, and many prelates; and about two millions lost their lives in the several expeditions; from A. D. 1040, to A. D. 1190. And this appears to me a very probable interpretation.

g *Angel of the waters.*] From *this text*, compared with chap. xiv. 18. some have inferred, that there are certain intellectual beings which preside over the *several elements* of *water* and *fire*; and by consequence, of *earth* and *air*.

h *Thou art holy.*] I follow those *copies*, which read it, και ο οσιος, whereas others have it, ο εσομενος, as in other places of this book.

i *Third*

given them blood to drink, for they are worthy of it; worthy to find such horrors as these, whenever they look for refreshment and comfort. *And I heard another* angel, whose voice seemed to come *from the altar, saying, Yea, O Lord God Almighty*, it is indeed thus; *true and righteous [are]* all *thy judgments.* Heaven adores the equity of thy proceeding; and the most impious inhabitants of earth, or hell, shall not be able to find any thing to object against them, even when they have the appearance of the greatest severity.

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Rev. XVI. 6.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us now raise our eyes and our hearts above the low and sordid scenes of mortality, to those happy and exalted spirits *who are described as standing before the crystal sea, with golden harps* in their hands. Let us attentively hearken to those broken and imperfect echoes of *the song of Moses, and of the Lamb*, which a gracious God causes to descend, as it were, to this world of ours, and which sometimes sweetly mingle themselves with the clamour of strife, with the din of folly, with the groans of misery. Happy and glorious is their condition now, who are freed from all these evils, and who triumph over all their enemies; whom, as it was said to *Israel* of the *Egyptians, having beheld, they shall see them no more for ever:* (Exod. xiv. 13.) They are now acknowledging their great Deliverer, singing everlasting *praises* to his name, and celebrating the wonders of his works, and the righteousness and truth of all his ways. *O Lord God Almighty, O thou King of saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy holy name? Let the nations come, and worship in thy presence;* let them pay thee their humble reverence and homage, before

Ver. 1 2, 3

4

i *Third vial.*] Some interpret this of the persecution of the church of Bohemia. (See Mr. *Pyle in loc.*) But this by no means suits the act of adoration, ver. 5, 6. It seems to refer to calamities to be brought on some parts of the papal kingdom. According to the order of time, Mr. Lowman supposes this to refer to the bloody wars between the Guelphs and Gibellines, or the papal and *imperial* factions whereby the popes were driven out of Italy into France; from A. D. 1200, to A. D. 1371. During this period, both these parties had joined in many persecutions, and a violent one raged against the Albigenses; the *inquisition* was began about A. D. 1216; and the council of Lateran established these severe and cruel methods of supporting the papacy. And *God gave them also blood to drink,* (ver. 6,) for a violent contest arose between the papal and *imperial* parties, about the right of presenting to ecclesiastical preferments, so that almost all the cities in Italy were engaged in civil wars, and great multitudes destroyed. In A. D. 1282, all the French in Sicily were massacred. Thus were they, who *shed the blood of the saints,* punished by civil contentions and bloodshed. And, on the whole, this seems to be the most probable and satisfactory interpretation.

a *Fourth*

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before the *vials* of thy *wrath are poured out:* those *vials*, which, terrible as their contents are, the benevolent spirits of heaven, 6--8 *prepare themselves*, at thy command, to pour forth *with pleasure;* Chap. XVI. 1. applauding, in their *responsive hymns*, thy *righteous judgments*, 5,--7 even when the *sorest* and most dreadful *plagues* torment *the worshippers of the beast and his image;* 3, 4 even when their *seas* and their *rivers* are *turned into blood.* Whatever be the calamities, whether past or future, to which any of these particulars may refer, surely they are big with terror to those wretches who 6 on any pretence, are *pouring forth the blood of thy prophets and thy saints.* They *are worthy* of having *blood given them to drink*, and accordingly, thou hast a dreadful draught in reserve for them. And, though some of them may have laid down their *hoary heads in peace*, which we might rather have expected, would have been *brought to the grave with blood*, the *day of thy vengeance* will surely come: a vengeance so terrible, that nothing but a zeal for thy violated law, and thine injured gospel, would make the very sight of it, *supportable* to those whose cause shall then be pleaded, and whose blood shall be visited on *their tormentors* and *murderers.*

SECT. XIX.

The pouring forth of the four last vials, and the awful events they produce; with the incorrigible obstinacy of the sinners on whom this vengeance is executed. Rev. XVI. 8, *to the end.*

Revelation XVI. 8.

SECT. XIX.

AND the three former angels having thus poured forth their vials on the earth, and sea, and the rivers of water, *the fourth angel* Rev. XVI. 8. *poured forth his vial on the sun*[a]; *and*, in consequence of that, an extraordinary *power was given*

Rev. XVI. 8.

AND the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

a *Fourth angel poured forth his vial on the sun.*] Some interpret this of the quarrel between the popes and *emperors*, in the *fourteenth*, *fifteenth*, and *sixteenth* centuries. See Mr. *Pyle in loc.* Mr. Lowman, with greater probability, refers it to the long and bloody wars in Italy, France, Germany, and Spain, occasioned by a schism in the papacy; (from A. D. 1378, to A. D. 1530;) there being three popes, in three lines of succession, at the same time. During this period the Turks took Constantinople, and put an end to the *eastern* empire. And some suppose there is a further reference to hot and burning seasons which should destroy the fruits of the earth, and occasion pestilential disorders; and historians inform us, that this was the case in the time supposed to be here referred to; particularly by means of the *sweating sickness*, which began in England, and spread wide into other countries, particularly Germany, A. D. 1517; and again A. D. 1529. But that *they repented not*, (ver. 9,) is evident from the war commenced against the Bohemians; the infamous conduct of the council of Constance, in burning John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, in violation of the public faith, and establishing that scandalous doctrine, *that faith is not to be kept with heretics*, &c. &c.

b *Fifth*

given to it, to scorch men with an intolerable heat, so that they seemed, as it were, to live in the very *fire* itself. *And men were scorched with* sudden calentures, and with *great* and unsufferable fierceness of *heat; and* yet, instead of giving glory to the great Author of these awful chastisements, which afforded them so lively an idea of everlasting burnings, as if they had already been inhabitants of the world of despair, *they blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues.* And the continuance of their torments did not subdue their hearts, but they still persisted, as with a diabolical obstinacy, *and repented not, to give glory to him,* by a confession of their sins, by seeking his mercy, and returning to his obedience. (Compare Isa. xxiv. 6.)

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

And as these vials had greatly affected the kingdom of the beast, the next came still nearer to him; for, *the fifth angel poured forth his vial upon the throne of the beast* itself[b]; *and his kingdom was darkened,* so that his unhappy subjects, from whom he had so long veiled the light of God's word, and of his favour, had not the benefit of the solar rays, either to guide or chear them. (Compare Ezek. xxxii. 8.) And yet at the same time, the secret fire kindled in their veins by the former scorching heat continued; *and they gnawed their tongues for* the extremity of the pain and *anguish* which they felt; *And* they still *blasphemed the* great *God,* the tremendous Majesty *of heaven,* as well as earth,

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because

b *Fifth vial.*] Mr. Pyle interprets this of the perplexity occasioned to the See of Rome by removing the seat of it to Avignon, and the schism between the popes. But this prophecy seems to refer to a later period. Mr. Lowman's interpretation is more probable, who refers it to the *protestant* reformation, and the confirmation of it by the principal states of Europe, notwithstanding all the attempts of the pope, and in opposition to the papal authority; from A. D. 1560, to A. D. 1650. During this period, several nations renounced subjection to the pope, and have continued free to this day; and, in other nations, his power has been greatly abridged and restrained. This event gave great vexation to the popes, and their adherents; occasioned invasions, assassinations, massacres, and bloody wars; as the civil wars in France, the wars in Germany about the reformation, the war between Spain and the united provinces, the Spanish invasion of England, and the powder plot; the massacre of Paris, &c. Yet all proved unsuccessful to prevent the establishment of the reformed religion. And *that they repented not of their deeds,* (ver. 11,) is evident from the instances of their rage and cruelty already mentioned, and which they take care to repeat whenever they have power: and especially from the edicts of the council of Trent, (from A. D. 1542, to A. D. 1562,) which instead of diminishing or relaxing, increased and confirmed the corruptions of popery, and condemned all doctrines tending to reformation.

c *River*

SECT. XIX.

earth, *for their pains and their ulcers*, which the scorching heat had excited; *and* they *repented not of their* wicked *works*, whereby they had awakened his just indignation.

Rev. XVI. 11.

because of their pains and their sores and repented not of their deeds.

12 *And the sixth angel poured forth his vial upon the great river Euphrates*[c]; *and its water*, wide and rapid as the stream had been, *was dried up*, immediately, *that a way might be prepared for* the march of *the kings from the rising of the sun*, who appeared in vision as coming to the borders of it, with all their armies, to pour forth destruction upon the beast and his kingdom.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 *And*, as *I saw* the dragon standing in my presence, with the beast and the false prophet near him, as the great abettors of his kingdom, which was threatened by this invasion, I had an intimation given me of the various efforts they should make for the preservation of it: [*and*] *out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet*[d], [*there came*] evidently *three* animals, which expressed *unclean spirits*, being represented by creatures *like frogs: For these are the spirits of demons*, whose design it is to impose upon mankind by the most artful stratagems, and pretences of *working miracles*, by *which* they attempted to support the kingdom they had raised: and indeed, it seemed they did even enchant whole nations; for they were permitted by God, to *go forth to the kings* of that part *of the earth* where the seat of the beast was; *and*, indeed, his territory was so extensive, that it might be said, they went through *the whole world*; and they operated so powerfully, as *to bring them together, to the battle of that great day of God the Almighty*, in which he was secretly determined to pour forth his vengeance upon them. And, as this last effort of this infernal agent would be a signal trial of the faith and

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth

c *River Euphrates.*] It appears to me, that this implies the *invasion of the papal kingdom* from the *east*; but, as I believe the vision not yet *accomplished*, I freely confess, that it is involved in those *clouds and darkness* which I am not able to penetrate. Mr. Pyle explains it of the conquest of the *eastern* Christians, by the growing power of the Ottoman house, and the contempt of popery in some parts of the west. But this part of the prophecy seems to refer to an event much later; and like the rest, to denote some judgment on *the papal kingdom*, to happen, probably, between A. D. 1700, and A. D. 1900.

d *False prophet.*] As the *false prophet* is here joined with the *beast*, and also in chap. xix. 20, and there said to *work miracles* before the *beast*, he seems to be the same mentioned chap. xiii. 11, 12, but there described as another *beast*, and said to *do great miracles* in the sight of the *beast*. See *sect.* xvi. *notes* h, i.

c *Keepeth*

keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

and constancy of the saints, in order the better to fortify them against it, I heard a voice which I understood to be that of our Lord Jesus Christ, saying, *Behold I come* suddenly and unexpectedly, *as a thief*, that surprises a sleeping family: *blessed* [*is*] *he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments*[e], *that* they may not suddenly be snatched from him, and *he may not* be forced to *walk naked, so that men should see his shame.* Let my servants, therefore, guard against these sudden surprizes, which during this time of danger and alarm may frequently happen. SECT. xix. Rev. XVI 15

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

16 *And* the army appearing against the saints, as was observed above, *He*, that is, God, by the secret conduct of his Providence, so disposed things, that he *gathered them together*[f] *into a* certain *place*, [*which is*] *called in the Hebrew language, Armageddon*, or the mountain of Megiddo, because it was to be a place more remarkable for slaughter than Megiddo had ever been.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

17 *And* when they were there assembled, *the seventh angel poured forth his vial into the air; and there came forth a great voice from the temple of heaven*, even *from the* very *throne* of God himself, *saying*, "*It is* now *done*, the great work is just compleating."

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake *and* so great.

18 *And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was* also together with them *a great earthquake*, to add new horror to the scene, *such as there had not been from the time that men were upon the earth*; even *such, and so great an earthquake*, quite unequalled in history or observation.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities

19 *And the great city was* immediately *divided into three parts, and the cities of the Gentiles fell down. And* thus it appeared, that *Babylon the great came into remembrance before*

e *Keepeth his garments.*] Dr. Lightfoot thinks here is an allusion to what that *Jewish officer* called *the man of the mountain*, that is, of *the house of the Lord*, used to do, when taking his round in the temple to examine *the watch*; if he met with any asleep, he had a liberty to set fire to his garments. Perhaps, in this case, the person might be obliged to appear in *the fragments* of his *burnt garments* the next day, which would be a great disgrace. See *his Works*, Vol. I. p. 919. According to Ainsworth, on Numb. xviii. 4, 5,) they were beaten by the provost, and their *garments* were *taken away* and *burnt*.

f *He gathered them.*] This seems a memorable circumstance; they were the *dragon's army*, yet God assembled them. Such oblique intimations of the interposition of Providence, are wonderfully instructive, and they are scattered up and down in many places of the sacred writings.—That Megiddo had been a place remarkable for slaughter, See Judges v. 19; 2 Kings ix. 27; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22. Compare Zech. xii. 11. To express the certain destruction that should come upon these antichristian powers, they are described to be brought together to this mountain.

g *Seventh*

SECT. XIX.

fore God, to give her the long-threatened *cup of the wine of the fiercest wrath*, in which all the most dreadful ingredients of vengeance were, as it were, mingled together, like poignant poison in the strongest wine, to give it the greater power and efficacy. *And* the whole face of nature was thrown into such a consternation by means of this grand event, that *every island fled away, and the mountains were found no more. And a great* and violent storm of *hail*, the stones of which were *as of the weight of a talent, descended from heaven upon men*, so as to dash in pieces the stoutest heroes, how well soever they might be armed and defended. *And men*, instead of being reformed by it, *blasphemed God* so much the more *for the plague of the hail; for the plague of it was very great*, and brought along with it a very extensive ruin and desolation[g].

Rev. XVI. 19, 20, 21

cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHATEVER particular events these *vials* might be respectively intended to represent, they all agree in giving us most awful views of the *Divine power* and *agency* over the whole universe. He is able to *scorch* and blast *the earth with* insufferable *heat*, to veil it in midnight *darkness*, to *dry up its rivers*, or even shake its foundations, so as to *throw down*, in a moment, the strongest and the proudest *cities*. From the air he can cause even *rivers of ice* to descend, sufficient, not only to destroy our frail and tender bodies, but those regular fortifications which are deemed impregnable; turning them into the graves of those who seek and expect protection from them. How worthy is this tremendous Being of our *homage* and *reverence?* And yet men *hear* of his awful judgments, and sometimes *see* and *feel* them too, and continue *unreformed*. Even while they are *gnawing their tongues* through the extremity of *pain* and anguish, it is possible, that as well as their wounded tongues will give them leave, they may *blaspheme the God of heaven*, and utter their impotent rage and malice against him. The *infernal regions* resound with diabolical language: and O, that so many parts of this *earth* bore no *resemblance* to them. But let the outrage of the wicked be what it may, God, when he enters into judgment, will

Ver. 8, 12, 18, 9, 10, 11

g *Seventh vial.*] This is introductory to the fall of the papal kingdom; and the expressions, ver. 19. may only signify, that great numbers should fall by these awful judgments, which were only introductory to the full and complete ruin afterwards described.

will *overcome*. And, though the rage of his enemies engages them to *gather themselves together*, the event will prove, that it is only as *sheep for the slaughter*. And, while they are acting in this with the utmost freedom, they are indeed assembled by *him*, their own angry passions subserving the purposes of his righteous *Providence*. SECT. XIX. Ver. 16

Let us confide in his word, let us attend to his voice ; and, in spite of all our difficulties and dangers, let us do our endeavour, to secure the *blessedness* of that man, who *watcheth, and keepeth his garments ;* who is always on his guard against *every* surprize, which might expose him to *shame* in the presence of his Master, though he should come in ever so expected a manner, even *like a thief in the night*. 15

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In order to let the author into the meaning of the seven vials, he sees a representation of the great harlot sitting upon a mysterious beast ; and hears her doomed to destruction by the Divine judgments. Rev. XVII. *throughout.*

Rev. XVII. 1.
AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither : I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters ;

Revelation XVII. 1.

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AND, when all this *was* done, *one of the seven angels, who had* been honoured with bearing *the seven vials*, the pouring forth of which I have just described, *came and spake with me, saying to me, Come*, [*and*] *I will shew thee*, to what this prophetic scene, which has passed before thy view, principally refers, even *the judgment of the great harlot, that sitteth upon many waters*, whom thou shalt now see ; and observe the terrible vengeance to which she is reserved, though so many people have been corrupted by her, and though she has tyrannized over them in so insolent and imperious a manner : Even of her *with whom the kings of the earth have* so long *committed fornication*, (compare Isa. xxiii. 17,) *and* their subjects have been debauched with them ; so that, in a manner, *all the inhabitants of the earth have been drunk with the wine of her whoredom*, as if they had taken some powerful provocative, to make them doat upon her, and sacrifice every dictate of religion, and reason, and even common sense, to those alluring arts with which she has been tempting Rev. XVII. 1. 2

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

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tempting them. *And he brought me in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman,* of an impudent front, and a most imperious and
Rev. XVII. 3. cruel appearance, *sitting upon a scarlet beast,* fierce and savage; and the beast had gaudy trappings of embroidery upon it, *full of blasphemous names,* ascribing to itself, and the harlot upon it, properties and glories which belong to God alone; and *having* also, like the beast which I saw before, (chap. xiii. 1,) *seven heads and ten horns;* referring to the hills on which the city, designed by this harlot stood, and the number of kingdoms subject to its government.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 *And* the charms of her person, such as they were, were set off with all the gorgeous ornaments of the most splendid dress: for, *the woman was clothed with purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; having* also *a golden cup in her hand full of* that inflaming mixture, by which those who drank of it, were instigated to all *the abominations and pollution of her* dissolute and abandoned *whoredom;* that is, those idolatrous practices, which the society of men represented by this infamous woman, had carried to so shame-

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

5 ful a height. (Compare Jer. li. 7.) But, that she might appear in my eyes as a criminal, marked out by God for speedy *and* dreadful execution, [*she had*] *upon her forehead* [*her*] *name,* her titles and crimes, *written;* and the first word was *MYSTERY:* the great mystery of iniquity, abetted by all the fraud and artifice which can be conceived, is represented by this woman: after which followed these words, *BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH;* the most impudent strumpet that ever appeared upon earth, and the greatest procuress of lewdness that ever polluted the face

5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 of it. *And I saw the woman drunk;* and was informed, that it was *with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;* of which she had gorged vast quantities, and for which she still thirsted impatiently; and seemed to cast her greedy eyes around, as longing for renewed draughts of it. *And I wondered, when I saw her, with great amazement*[a], as I knew she

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

[a] *Amazement.*] This seems a plain argument, that the society referred to was Christian; for it had been no great wonder, that a heathen power should *persecute.*

b *The*

she represented a society that would call itself Christian, and pretend a regard for Jesus and his saints, in the midst of all this cruel persecution of them; and also, for the honour of God amidst all these unequalled idolatries and immoralities. *And the angel said unto me, Why* 7 *dost thou wonder?* Hast thou not thyself had intimation of this antichristian sect, and this great apostacy? *I will tell thee* the secret of the whole matter; *the mystery of the woman, and of the beast which carries her, which hath,* as thou seest, *the seven heads, and the ten horns. The* 8 *beast which thou* formerly *sawest, was, and is, not* [b]; that is, God will cut short its reign, *and he will* indeed *ascend,* as has been represented, *out of the bottomless pit, and go* suddenly *into destruction; and the inhabitants of the earth, (whose names,* as I said, *are not written in the book of life, from the foundation of the world,) shall wonder, seeing the beast, who* for a little while, *was, and is not;* that is, he shall quickly be overthrown, *though he is* to appear for a while and perform such great wonders.—*Here* [*is*] a proof of *the understanding that hath* 9 *wisdom;* for the utmost sagacity may here be put to the trial. But this I will observe, to guide the enquiring mind, and I am commissioned by God to give this key to the mystery, that *the seven heads* of the beast *are seven mountains,* on which that celebrated city is built, *on which the* infamous *woman* I have been describing, *sitteth. And there are seven kings,* or 10 forms of government [c], *five* of them *are fallen, and one is,* [*and*] *the other is not yet come; and when he comes, he must endure for a little time,* but will soon be destroyed and swallowed up. *And the beast,* of whom I said, *that* he *was, and* 11 *is not, he is the eighth, and* he *is of the seven* [d]; he ariseth out of the remainders of this people, *but*

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest, was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that

b *The beast—was, and is not*] This seems to intimate, that the persecuting power of Pagan Rome, should for a while revive in Papal Rome, and, ere long, be utterly destroyed.

c *Seven*—Forms of Government.] Some reckon these to be the Roman *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors, and popes.* But I much question, whether this be a right solution.—Mr. Lowman supposes here is an intimation, that the seventh form of government was not to begin till the imperial power was destroyed. And this last may, on some account, be called the *seventh,* and for other reasons, the *eighth* head of government, as the exarchate of Ravenna was in some sense, a new form of government, and yet hardly so distinct and proper a form, as to be reckoned for a different *head.* Compare chap. xii. 6. note d.

d *He is the eighth,* &c.] Mr. Fleming understands this of the government of the Ostrogoths in Rome; who, though they were the *seventh* head in number, yet were not

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but at length *goes into destruction*, as the rest, though his reign shall be so much longer than any of his predecessors. *And the ten horns*
Rev. XVII. 11 *which thou sawest, are ten kings*, or kingdoms,
12 *which* shall arise out of the ruin of the former state, and shall all, for a while, be dependent upon, and subject to the beast; they *have not*, indeed, *yet received their kingdom, but they shall receive authority from the beast as kings*, though greatly under his limitation and control, to reign *for one hour*, for a certain limited time.
13 And however *these* princes may be disunited in their political interests, which may, in some respects, contradict each other, yet, with respect to their unhappy prejudices in religion, and idolatrous inclinations, there shall be a surprising agreement between them; and they *have one mind* and sentiment in that respect, *and shall* consent to *deliver* over *their own power and authority to the beast*, to be employed by him for the advancement of his interest; so that they shall act but as his viceroys, even in their own
14 territories. *These* also *shall* presume to *make war with the Lamb; and* the consequence may easily be conjectured; for *the Lamb*, who bears such magnificent titles, and who hath already triumphed over all the powers of hell, *shall* undoubtedly *overcome them*, and triumph over them; *for he is* indeed, (what some vain mortals have impiously and arrogantly called themselves,) *Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*, the supreme Ruler of all governors and magistrates upon the face of the earth, to whom dominion over them belongs, by the strictest and most unalienable right; *and those that are with him*, and have the honour to fight under his banner, [*are*] not only *called* to arm themselves in this glorious cause, but *chosen*[e] to act in the service

that was, and is not, even he is the eighth and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him, *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

not of the *seven*, that is, such as the *six first*, and the *eighth*, because they were *foreigners*, whereas the others were *natives*. *Flem. on the First Resur.* p. 106, 107. This exact prophecy, says he, is a great confirmation of the Divine authority of this book. Limborch understands it of the German Emperor, who was only *titular* king of Rome. See the preceding note.

e *Called and chosen faithful.*] Here may very possibly be, as the *ingenious author* of the Christian warfare has represented, in his *learned and beautiful remarks* on this *text*, a reference to the *military custom* of the Greeks; who used to *call* the people together when any expedition was designed, out of which there were some *selected* to serve in the action intended, who swore *fidelity* to their leader. (Compare 2 Pet. i. 10, note i.) But I can by no means suppose that this is the *uniform* idea to be annexed to the word *chosen* in scripture, any more than I can suppose the term *called*, always to signify *invited to a feast*; which is an idea another *ingenious writer* has endeavoured

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Rev. XVII. 15

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

vice, *and* they are *faithful* to the engagements into which they enter. All these were the words of that angel who was commissioned to instruct me in the meaning of an appearance which had thrown me into such amazement. *And he* proceeded, and *said* further *unto me, The waters which thou sawest, on which the* specious, but abandoned *harlot sate, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues,* a vast multitude of different nations and languages, who shall consent for a long time, to those degenerate forms of religion which she shall introduce. *And the ten horns which thou sawest on the* savage *beast, these* are the kingdoms subject to her. But the princes of them shall at length turn against her, so that she shall, as it were, be thrown down, and gored by the creature that has so long tamely and patiently carried her; for they *shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked;* they shall strip her of all those ornaments which they have profusely lavished away upon her; *and they shall* be ready, as it were, in the transport of their indignation and zeal, to *eat her* very *flesh, and shall burn her with fire.* They shall be bent upon destroying their stupid idolatry, and all the monuments of it, and turn their keenest resentment upon the abettors and instruments of such cruel persecution as they have exercised: *For God hath given it into their hearts,* by a strong and powerful impression, *to execute his* counsel and *sentence*[f], and they shall agree in it, *even to perform one purpose. And* he hath left them under a fatal infatuation, in opposition to true policy, as well as virtue and religion, so as *to give their kingdoms to the beast, till the words of God be fulfilled;* and then their minds shall be turned, and their eyes opened, and they shall ruin this oppressive society more eagerly than they ever established it. *And the woman which thou sawest, is the great* imperial *city,*

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire;

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is

endeavoured to lead his readers to affix to it. The truth is, both signify something much more *general,* though both may be applied, in *particular* cases, in the *limited* sense contended for. Compare Isa. xxxiv. 2, 6, 7.

f *Execute his sentence.*] We render it *to fulfil his will.* Hence some have *inferred,* that it is the *will of God,* that heretics should be *cut off.* But it is sufficiently known to what extremities people are driven to find any thing that looks like an argument for *persecution* in the New Testament, when they are forced to have recourse to a *text* for this purpose, which only proves that God had, in his wise and holy counsel, determined that the *idolatrous and persecuting antichristian* power should be *destroyed.*

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Rev. XVII. 18

city, that ruleth over the kings of the earth, and now disposes of their crowns at her pleasure, none daring to make war against her.

is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 9, 18 EASILY might we have apprehended, that *Rome* had been here designed, though it had not been so particularly described by its situation on *seven hills*, or by the empire it then possessed *over all the kingdoms of the world.* The *harlot* might be sufficiently distinguished by her *names of blasphemy*, by her *cup of* enchantment, 3 by her *titles*, *MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE* 4, 5 *MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* Yea, she might be known by this *single* charac- 6 ter, of having *made herself drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* And is it *heathen Rome*, to whom these characters are most remarkably applicable? The *apostle* would not then have *wondered with so great admiration*, that idolatry and persecution should prevail, where the former had raged for so many ages, and the latter almost from the very beginning of *Christianity;* and to such a degree, in the days of *Nero*, who, as their own *historian* tells us, had *thirty years* before this, added *mockeries* and *insults* to torment, that *Christians* were dressed up in the *skins of wild beasts*, and so exposed to be worried on the *theatre:* a method which hath, indeed, *figuratively* speaking, been everywhere practised, and must be practised, if *Christianity* is to be made *ridiculous*, or odious. But the true occasion of the apostle's astonishment was, that *Rome* professing *Christianity*, *Rome* setting up for the *head of the Christian world*, should have emulated and exceeded any *Pagan city*, and even itself in its *Pagan state*, in its idolatries, and in its cruelties. And this is a fact indeed *wonderful.* But these are the secret *counsels of God*, even those counsels which are to us unsearchable. Nevertheless, the 17 beauty and glory of them shall at length be apparent. *The kings of the earth*, though like *Nebuchadnezzar*, (Isa. x. 7,) *they meant it not*, are now *fulfilling the plan* of Divine Providence; a *plan* that shall at length appear wise and harmonious, though the permission of all these absurdities and horrors make a part of it. And when *the words of God are fulfilled*, they who *with one mind* have 19 given *their power and strength to the beast*, in order to support the *harlot*, shall be as unanimous *in hating her, and making her desolate and naked*, shall be ready to *devour her flesh*, and consume 14 her in *her own fires.* Fierce and savage as the *beast* may at present appear, its *war with the Lamb* shall be utterly in vain; for *the Lamb* is always *victorious*, and will assert his grand and imperial titles,

LORD

LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS. May we all list under his banner; May we not only be *called*, but *chosen* and *faithful, faithful* even to *death*; since all the rage of men, and *multitudes*, and *nations*, and *tongues*, if it were united against us, could not prevent his giving us a crown of *victory*, and a part in his *everlasting triumphs*. SECT. XX. Ver. 15

SECT. XXI.

A sublime description of the fall of Babylon, and an account of the lamentation of her friends and merchants over her. Rev. XVIII. *throughout.*

Rev. XVIII. 1.
AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Revelation XVIII. 1.
AND after this, I saw an angel descending from heaven, who had, in his countenance and appearance, the signatures of *great power; and the earth was enlightened with his glory,* which spread a vivid lustre all around him, reflected from every neighbouring object. SECT. XXI. Rev. XVIII. 1

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

2 *And he cried with* great *might* [*and*] *a loud voice* of triumphant joy, in the words of Isaiah, (chap. xxi. 9,) *saying, It is fallen, it is fallen*[a], *even Babylon the great; and* what was prophesied concerning the celebrated seat of the Chaldean empire, shall presently be verified in this detested city; so that we may already say, *it is become the habitation of demons,* (as desolate places were reputed to be,) *and the hold of every unclean spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird;* (Isa xiii. 21; Jer. i. 39; li. 37.)

3 For all nations have drank of the wine of the wrath of her fornification, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

3 *Because she hath caused all the nations to drink of the* intoxicating and inflaming *wine of her raging* and insatiable *whoredom; and* all *the kings of the earth have committed whoredom with her, and the merchants of the earth have* traded with her, and *been enriched by the abundance of her luxuries*[b].

4 And I heard another

4 *And I* then *heard another voice from heaven, saying* to the remainder of faithful souls

a *Is fallen.*] This is still the language of *prophecy*, expressing what shall certainly and speedily come to pass; for *verse the fourth* shows; that in strictness of speech, Babylon was yet to be considered as *standing*.

b *Luxuries.*] The word τρηνους, seems to signify such *luxury* of diet as cherishes *wantonness*, and dispose to acts of *unchastity*, and may well represent the manner in which the Roman clergy have pampered themselves, and the effects it has produced, to the scandal of the Christian profession, in the eyes of all the world, as well as the idolatries which have been established and maintained to support that *luxury*. Compare 1 Tim. v. 11, and the note there.

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souls which were yet in Babylon, *Come* ye *out from* the midst of *her*, *O my people*, separate yourselves from this accursed society, *that ye*
Rev. XVIII. 4 *may not be partakers with her in her sins*, which are so polluting and ensnaring; *and that ye may not*, by a fatal consequence, *partake of her plagues* too, which those who share her sins must expect to share, whatever their former profession may
5 have been. *Because her sins have followed up to heaven* with their clamours, *and her unrighteous actions are come up in remembrance before* that *God*, who will not fail severely to visit her for
6 them. And now, O my people, *give her, as she also has given to you, and recompense to her double, according to her works;* for God will plead your cause for you: *in the cup* of terror, *which she has mingled* for those whom she was not able to seduce and debauch, *mingle her a double quantity* of those poisonous ingredients:
7 *In* full *proportion to the degree in which she hath*, for so many ages, *made ostentation of her glory, and lived in luxury, inflict upon her torment and grief*, and vengeance; *because she has* audaciously *said in her heart*, while the Divine threatenings have been sounding in her very ears, *I sit as a queen*, enthroned above the reach of adversity, *and I am not a* desolate *widow*, as it hath been pretended I should be; *and I shall not see*
8 *sorrow.* (Compare Isa. xlvii. 7, 8.) *Therefore, in one day shall her plagues come* upon her, even upon this impious and abominable city, *death, and mourning, and famine*, which shall all unite their efforts against her; *and she shall be burnt with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judges her*; and all her boasted strength will, in his
9 presence, be weakness and confusion. *And the* other *kings of the earth*, who shall not be active in the execution before described, but still retain their affection for her, even the remainder of those, *who have committed fornication, and lived in luxury with her, shall mourn over her, and lament for her, when they shall see* the flames of wrath kindle about her, and *the smoke of her burning*, like that of Sodom in the day of its conflagration, ascending up to heaven.
10 They shall see it, *standing afar off for fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe*, and alas, *O thou great city, Babylon, the strong city!* well may we lament over thee; *for in one hour thy judgment is come*, and thy desolation is as sudden as

ther voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torments, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city; for in one hour is thy judgment come.

as it is dreadful and entire. *And the merchants of the earth,* those who enriched themselves by her expensive magnificence, *shall wail and lament over her,* out of a regard to their own interest, if not to her's; *because no one any longer shall buy their wares,* which which they had loaded so many gallant vessels that carried on a traffic with her: They shall lament, that so noble a vend for all the delicacies of a pompous and luxurious life, is lost; and that they can no longer thus dispose of *the ladings of gold, and silver, and every precious stone, and pearls, and* of the *fine linen* of Egypt, *and* the *purple* of Sidon, *and* the *silk* of the eastern countries, *and* the *scarlet, and every odoriferous wood,* that the plantations of Arabia, or the coast of India, could boast; *and every* curiously wrought *vessel of ivory, and every vessel of most precious wood,* in value exceeding even that, *and* all the utensils *of brass, and of iron, and of marble,* with which the houses of the rich, and of the great, have been furnished. No longer shall they there find a market for rich *and* fragrant commodities; for *cinnamon, and perfume, and myrrh, and incense,* nor for the more necessary *and* important supplies of *wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and kine, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves*[c]: *and* their yet more infamous traffic for the lives, and the very *souls of men,* which they sacrificed to their avarice, and their treachery, shall cease. *And* thou, O Babylon, shall join thy cry with theirs; for all *the fruits, which thy soul desired,* and for which alone thy degenerate nature had any remaining relish, *are gone from thee, and all* thy *delicious and splendid things are departed from thee; and* the loss is final as well as entire; for *thou shalt never find them any more.* I repeat it again, *the merchants of* all *these* [*commodities,*] *who were enriched by her, shall stand afar off,* in a mixture of terror and grief, *for fear of her torment, weeping, and mourning*[d], but absolutely

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; and no man buying her merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk and scarlet, and all thyne wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

11 12 13 14 15

c *Slaves*] The Greek word σωμαῖα has plainly this signification. Compare Tobit x. 9.

d *Weeping and mourning.*] There is in all this so-evident a *reference* to the *lamentation* over Tyre, described by Ezekiel, (chap. xxvii.) that I suppose few readers can fail to take notice of it. Comp. Isa. xxiii. 1, 7, 14, & *sim.* Some have interpreted many of these passages, as referring to the circumstances of Popish worship, and the trade of their priests; as verse 11, to the relicks, pardons and indulgencies; verse 12, to their images, and the furniture of their churches and chapels, and the variety of rich dresses for their

SECT. XXI.

ly incapable of giving her any relief; smiting on their breasts, *And saying, Alas, alas,* for *the great,* elegant, and magnificent *city, that* Rev. XVIII. *was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and* 16 *scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious* 17 *stones, and pearls! For,* who can sufficiently lament this sad instance of the uncertainty of all human things, when he sees, that, *in one hour, all these* great *riches are* laid waste, and *made desolate?* And this sad scene was represented to me in a lively vision; *and every pilot, and every one of the ship's company, and the mariners, and all that bestow their labour upon the sea, stood afar off* from the flames of the burning city, 18 *And cried, when they saw the smoke of her burning* ascend in such thick columns to heaven, *What* [*city is*] *like to the great city,* so long unequalled in its glory, and now in its ruin? 19 *And they* seemed like men in the greatest agony of distress, and *cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping, and mourning, saying, Alas, alas,* for *the great city, by whose magnificent expences,* arising from her profusion, and elegance, and grandeur, *all that had ships in the sea were enriched,* so that she alone was sufficient, as it were, to maintain the merchandise of the world; *for she is made desolate in one hour,* to a degree that we should have imagined utterly impossible.

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city?

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein where made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 But while they were thus lamenting their own loss and her's, I was affected in another manner, and could not forbear crying out in my own heart, *Rejoice over her, O thou just avenging heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets*[e], who look down from your abodes of glory, on so wonderful and interesting a scene. Take your part in the sacred triumph; *for on your account, God has pronounced sentence upon her;* he hath adjudged her to righteous destruction, for her opposition to his kingdom, and for the injuries done to you, who, with ardent and unwearied zeal, endeavoured to establish and promote it.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles, and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

And,

their images and priests; verse 13, to the incense used at their altars; verse 22, to the musical instruments used in their worship; and verse 23, to the vast numbers of lamps burning before their idolatrous altars, and the like—But it seems rather to centre in one view, the loss of every thing valuable and desirable, and the utter ruin of this magnificent city.

e *Apostles*] Nothing can be more *lively* than this *apostrophe*: in which the *apostles*, though honoured in Rome by so many *superstitious* and idolatrous rites, are nevertheless, called upon to *rejoice* in her *destruction*.

f *Hurled.*

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great milstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

And, as soon as I had uttered this in correspondence to the scene which had been represented of old, with relation to the great seat of the Chaldean empire, (Jerem. li. 64,) *a strong angel took a stone, like a great milstone; and*, with a vigorous and rapid motion, *hurled it into the sea, saying, Thus shall Babylon the great city*, unequal as the production of this event may seem to any human power, *be violently hurled away* [f] by the almighty arm of an avenging God, *and* sink into the depths of destruction; so that it shall *never be found any more.* 21

SECT. XXI.

Rev. XVIII.

22 And the voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a milstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

And the harmonious *sound of harpers, and* other *musicians, and those who sound the flute, and the trumpet, shall no more be heard in thee; and every artificer of every* curious *trade*, employed for the accommodations and ornaments of life, *shall no more be found in thee*, O Babylon, *nor shall the noise of the milstone be heard in thee any more*, even to prepare bread for the meanest inhabitant. 22

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

And the light of a lamp shall no more be seen in thee, to gild thy dark night with its cheerful rays; *and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride*, rejoicing in their new relation, and celebrating the nuptial feast, *shall be heard in thee no more* [g]; *because thy merchants were grandees of the earth*, and maintained so shameful a traffic by every dishonest art, and *because all the nations were deceived by thy sorceries*, and poisoned by thy pernicious practices. 23

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth.

And to complete her guilt, as Babylon of old had grown great by the slaughter of Israel, so *in her*, who has been here represented, *was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints* of God, *even of all those who were slain upon the earth;* for this wicked city exceeded all the rest of the world in cruelties, and might boast in the multitudes, of the martyrs she had slain, beyond all that had ever gone before her, in such detestable persecutions; and this hath filled up the measure of her iniquities, and plunged her into this irrecoverable ruin. 24

IMPROVE-

[f] *Hurled away.*] This the original words ορμημαλι βληθησεται import; as if falling by its own weight, its fall would not have been *rapid* enough. From hence Dr. Thomas Burnet infers, in his *Theory of the Earth*, that Rome, being first *fired*, (compare Dan. vii. 11,) will be swallowed up in a *lake of fire and brimstone*, as Sodom and Gomorrah were. *Burn. Theo.* Vol. II. p. 123. Compare Rev. xix. 20.

[g] Verse 22, 23.] Compare Jer. xxv. 10; xxxiii. 11; Ezek. xxvi. 13, & *sim.*

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXI.

FROM the particular detail which is here given us, of the *various commodities* in which *Babylon* traded with its *merchants*, we may surely take an incidental occasion to *reflect* upon the rich
Ver. 12, 13 bounty of Divine Providence to the children of men, in giving them such a *variety* of good things, which tend not only to their necessary *support*, but their *ornament* and *delight*. To whatever pernicious purposes, vanity and luxury may abuse *the silver and the gold, and the gems and the pearls, the fine linen and silk, the purple and scarlet, the ivory and the marble, the cinnamon and the myrrh*, as well as the more important blessings *of wheat and oil, of kine, and sheep, and horses*, all are the gifts of God; and if wisely and properly used, may justly excite our thankfulness to him; and it is on ourselves, and not on him, that we are to charge it, if what should have been for *our welfare* becomes *a trap*, and our *treasures* be turned into *idols*. Nor is the wise disposition of Providence to be disregarded in causing many of these things to be the peculiar *products* of *different* countries, denying to some what he has given to the rest, that so *traffic* and *commerce* may be encouraged, and by it, society and intercourse *extended* among different nations, and provision made for that spread of *Divine* knowledge, which had in many instances been impossible, if human industry, quickened by necessity, and the prospect of gain, had not invented those *arts of navigation*, to which *Great Britain*, above all other nations, is so much indebted, and without which, indeed, our beautiful and fruitful island had been a desert, inaccessible to men.

But, though this *oblique* reflection may profitably be made, the *great object* to which we are directed by *this chapter*, is the cer-
12 tain and final *ruin of Babylon*, which, how highly soever exalted, how superbly soever *adorned*, how *luxuriously* soever *regaled, shall*
8 *fall, shall fall as a milstone cast into the sea. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her*; and it is impossible she can withstand the force of his omnipotent arm. Long has she, in a metaphorical
2 sense, been *the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird*; and God will make her so in *another*, even
5 in a literal sense, when he shall appear to *remember* and punish those *iniquities, which have reached unto heaven*; among which,
24 various and detestable as they have been, shedding *the blood of the prophets and saints*, must be reckoned as most *enormous*. Let no triumph of the *antichristian* powers, for the present, shake our faith in these most certain and indubitable prophecies; and let

let that charge never be forgotten, *Come forth from her, O my people, and be separate.*" Blessed be God, that a *separation* has been *begun*, that it has been so long *supported*, and that so many attempts to bring back God's *Israel* into captivity have been *defeated*. May the boundaries of the *reformation* be extended; may the *purity* of the *reformed churches* be more and more advanced, and all remainders of *superstition*, *persecution*, and *imposition*, be taken away. And, to conclude all, let those who are now *living deliciously*, and *glorifying themselves* in the forgetfulness of God, abusing the various gifts of his bounty to his dishonour, and saying in their hearts, that *they shall see no sorrow*, remember how suddenly their state may be changed; how quickly they may sink into the depths of misery, proportionable to the height of their abused prosperity; and experience a *torment* and *sorrow*, which will be *doubly* bitter in the remembrance of their former condition. Let such therefore, in whatever rank of life they are, according to the words of *Daniel* to the most illustrious *king of Babylon*, (Daniel iv. 27,) *Break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening out of their tranquility;* and give glory to God, before all their chearful *light* be exchanged for *darkness*, and all the harmony of their *music* for *weeping and wailing*, groaning and lamentation *for ever*.

SECT. XXI. Ver. 4 7 6 23 9--15

SECT. XXII.

The triumphs of the heavenly host in the fall of Babylon are described, and further illustrated, by the view of an attack made by Christ and his army, on the beast, which ended in an entire victory over him. Rev. XIX. *throughout.*

Rev. XIX. 1.
AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

Revelation XIX. 1.

SECT. XXII. Rev. XIX. 1.

AND after these things, this affecting representation of the certain destruction of Babylon, as the seat of the antichristian kingdom, *I heard the voice as of a great multitude in heaven*, who seemed to be triumphing on this occasion, *saying, Hallelujah;* let the name of Jehovah, the most high God, be ever praised and exalted. Let this great *salvation, and* all the *glory and honour*, which can arise from this, and all his other wonderful works *and* the *power* so amazingly displayed in them, be ascribed *to the Lord our God. For his judgments* [*are*] *true and righteous*, and we have lately seen a most glo-

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments;

2

SECT. XXII.

Rev. XIX. 2.

rious illustration of them; *for he hath judged the great harlot, who corrupted the* whole *earth with* the contagion of *her fornication; and he has* awfully *avenged the blood of his* faithful *servants* and martyrs, which hath been [*shed*] so profuse-
3 ly *by her* cruel *hand. And a second time,* at the conclusion of the hymn, *they said Hallelujah: and,* looking down upon her ruins, they added, *The smoke of her* [*torment*] *ascends for ever and ever;* and God is pursuing the impenitent sinners he has destroyed in her, with far more terrible vengeance in a future state, than any they could endure while they continued in
4 the body. (Isa. xxxiv. 10.) *And the twenty-four elders, and the four animals* so often mentioned before, who still appeared present, *fell down and worshipped God,* who was represented *sitting upon the throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah,* so let it be; let universal Hallelujahs, and everlasting praises, rise to thee, O thou ever-adorable Jehovah, who art most worthy to re-
5 ceive them. *And a voice came out from the throne, which said,* in my hearing, Now *praise our God* in the most exalted strains of rapturous devotion, *all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great,* in your various ranks and circumstances of life. Adore his great and magnificent name, so highly exalted, and in these scenes of wonder, so gloriously displayed.
6 *And I heard* [*a sound*] *which was as the voice of a great multitude, and* loud *as the voice of many waters,* when the waves of the sea are in a violent agitation, *and like the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God* Almighty, *the omnipotent* Jehovah, who is the Author and Support of universal nature, *reigneth,* and is about to exalt his kingdom among men to more visible splendour than it has ever
7 yet worn. And *we* will now, in an especial manner, *rejoice and exult* in the greatest transport of holy joy, *and we* will *give glory to him, because the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has prepared herself* to meet him, being adorned with all those ornaments, which are most grateful in themselves, and most agreeable to him. And he is going to espouse his church with circumstances of the highest festivity and
8 solemnity. *And it was given to her, that,* in token of her virgin-innocence and sanctity, *she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and resplendent;*

ments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine

fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

dent; and the fine linen, that I speak of, *is* intended to signify *the righteous acts of the saints*[a], whereby they are adorned in the sight of God, and an evidence given of the sincerity of that faith which interests them in the merit of what their Lord has performed, to which they ultimately owe their acceptance before him. SECT. XXII. Rev. XIX. 8.

9 And he said unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

9 *And he said unto me, Write* this down, as an important truth, in which all that read this book in future ages will be greatly concerned. *Happy, [are] they who are invited to* be guests at *the* splendid *marriage supper of the Lamb*, which is now prepared, and shall accept the invitation, so as to partake of its blessings. *And he said unto me, These are the true words of God*, and are to be regarded by thee, and all that read them, as an oracle which he hath inspired. (Compare 2 Cor. xi. 2.)

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

10 *And* while he was speaking to me in this manner, over-awed by his majestic appearance, *I fell before his feet, to pay homage to him. And he* immediately interposed to prevent it, and *said unto me, See [thou do it] not;* for *I am* not worthy of such regard from thee, being *a fellow-servant with thee, and with* the rest of *thy brethren*[b], *who* resolutely and faithfully *keep the testimony of Jesus. Pay thine homage*, in such expressions of it, *to God* alone. I am now sent for the service of that religion to which you and your brethren are making such considerable sacrifices; *for the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus*, and serves in a glorious manner, to confirm his Divine mission to all that know and duly observe the circumstances of it; and that which I now reveal to thee, make a considerable article of the proof.

And

[a] *The righteous acts of the saints.*] So δικαιωματα evidently signifies; and, therefore, though I make no doubt but it is with regard to the obedience and righteousness of the Son of God, that *all our righteous acts* are accepted before God, and have accordingly referred to this doctrine in the paraphrase; yet I cannot suppose that these words have that reference which some have imagined, to the *imputation* of his *righteousness to us.* And I hope Christian divines will have the courage to speak with the scripture, even though it should be at the expence of their reputation for orthodoxy with some, who profess, nevertheless, to make *scripture their standard.*

[b] *With the brethren.*] The expression in the Greek obliges me to give the word this turn: συνδουλος σου και των αδελφων σου. But Mr. Fleming understands it, *I am one of thy brethren*, which he thinks intimates that this was the *departed spirit* of an *apostle*; perhaps of St. Peter or St. Paul, or his own brother James, though not in a form to be known. And, on the same mistaken principle, he thinks the person speaking, chap. xxii. 9. might be the spirit of one of the prophets, perhaps Isaiah, or Ezekiel, or Daniel. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. I. p. 81.

SECT. XXII.

Rev. XIX. 11.

And a glorious vision immediately followed this; for *I saw heaven opened; and behold*, and observe it with due attention, *a white horse* appeared, *and he that sate upon it* [*was*] *called Faithful and True*, being indeed no other than the person speaking of him elsewhere, as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness; *and he judges, and makes war in righteousness*, and not like the unjust conquerors of the earth, who are so ready to use their superior power to oppress all that fall under it. This was the glorious Prince, *whose eyes* [*are*] piercing *as a flame of fire; and many diadems were upon his head, having* also *a* mysterious *name written* upon them, *which no man knows but himself;* to signify, that there are mysteries in his nature, and in the administration of his kingdom, which it is impossible for men to find out. *And* to express the irresistible power with which he triumphs over his enemies, and brings destruction upon them according to his pleasure, *he* [*was*] *clothed in a garment dipt in blood; and his name is called, The word of God*, the glorious and Divine Person, whom I have elsewhere spoken of, as in the beginning with God, and himself God, and the great Medium of Divine revelation in all ages. *And the armies which are in heaven followed him*, in token of being most willingly and entirely under his command, and they appeared [*riding*] *on white horses*, and themselves *clothed in fine linen, white, and* perfectly *clean* and pure, to denote their perfect innocence and righteousness. *And* he still retains this circumstance in the vision I at first saw of him, that *there went out of his mouth a sharp sword, that with it he might smite the heathen;* to signify the power of his word; *and he shall govern them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the indignation and wrath of Almighty God*, which was signified by the blood-staining his garments; to intimate, that he shall subdue the proudest enemies with as much ease as men burst grapes by treading them under their feet. (Compare Isa. lxiii. 2, 3.) *And he hath upon his garment, and his thigh*, that is, upon the sword which hangs upon his thigh, *a* magnificent and exalted *name written*, even *KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS;* to signify his universal empire over all the princes and potentates on earth, and in heaven.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself:

13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipt in blood: and his name is called, The word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourself together unto the supper of the great God;

And I saw a single angel, but one of great majesty and strength, detaching himself, as it were from the army in heaven, who followed the great leader of the Lord's host on their white horses: and he was seen by me *standing in the sun; and* to intimate the approaching slaughter and desolation which was so soon to come upon the enemies of the church, *he cried with a loud voice, saying to* the eagles, and vultures, and *all the* other *birds* of prey, *which were flying in the midst of heaven, Come and assemble yourselves to the supper of the great God;* for he is about to make a splendid entertainment for you; *That ye may eat the flesh of* mighty *kings, and the flesh of* famous *commanders*, who have led on their thousands to battle; *and the flesh of the mighty* soldiers, who have fought so courageously under their banners; *and the flesh of* warlike *horses*, that were advancing with so much intrepidity and rage to the battle; *and* the flesh of *those who sate thereon*, and were ready to trust to their strength or their speed; *and* the flesh *of all* the promiscuous multitude, *freemen and slaves, both small and great*, who shall fall down together in the dust, and pour out their souls in blood, leaving their mangled carcases for your prey. (Compare Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18.) *And*, to fulfil this awful decree of the great God, whose influence over all human affairs is supreme, and who knows how to work his own purposes, even by the greatest malice and rage of his enemies, *I saw the beast* appearing again, as at the head of the antichristian interest; *and the kings of the earth*, who supported him, and gave their power unto him; *and* I saw all *their armies gathered together, to make war with him who sitteth upon the* white *horse, and with* all *his army*, even the host of heaven, which I mentioned as with him: insensible of his superior power, and madly borne on to their own destruction, they marched their feeble forces against him, and all his celestial legions. *And* the issue was such as might be expected; for *the beast was taken captive*[c], *and with*

sect. xxii.

Rev. xix. 17.

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him

c *Beast was taken.*] What Brandt tells us, of the *interpretation* given by a divine of Heidelberg, to this text, as promising Frederick king of Bohemia, that he should take the emperor prisoner, and that all the other potentates of Europe should be subjected to his sovereign will, appears too *ridiculous* to be canvassed; but I mention it, to engage men to be cautious how they apply any of these *prophecies*

SECT. XXII.

Rev. XIX. 20. *with him* also *the false prophet, who had wrought* so many fallacious *signs before him, by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast, and those who worshipped his image;* and they were bound fast in chains of Divine vengeance, and *both of them were cast alive*[d] *into the lake of fire which burnt* so fiercely, enraged *with* stores of *brimstone*, to make the flames more durable, and more tormenting.

21 *And the rest*, who had so insolently and foolishly followed the banners of these accursed leaders, *were slain with the sword that came out of the mouth of* the great leader of the heavenly army, even *him who sate on the* white *horse*, described before, robed with light, and crowned with glory. And their carcases were left unburied on the field of battle; *and all the birds* of the air, according to the invitation which the angel had given them, *were satiated with their flesh.*

him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1—3 LET us learn by what we have here been reading, to adore the *Lord God Omnipotent, who reigneth* over all, and who displays the *truth and righteousness of his judgments*, in his vengeance on the enemies of his church, even when he inflicts on them *a torment, the smoke of which rises up for ever and ever.* In the certain assurance, that in due time he will plead his own cause, and 5, 6 rescue and exalt his people, let all his *servants and people* praise him, even *all that fear him, both small and great*, and labour to live that Divine life of gratitude, and joyful thanskgiving on earth, which may anticipate the pleasures and employments of the heavenly world. The time will at length come, when all of such a character shall celebrate *the marriage-supper of the Lamb*; yea, when 7, 8 the whole society shall appear in his presence as *one chaste virgin*, whom he has espoused to himself; and whom, with unutterable delight, he places in his more immediate view, not only as *arrayed in robes of pure and shining linen, which is the righteousness of the saints*, but as perfectly *free from spot, or blemish, or any such thing.*

cies to *events* which may happen to *themselves*, or those for whom they are immediately concerned. *Brandt's Hist. of the Reform.* Vol. IV. p. 202.—Compare chap. xvi. 13; and § xvi. note h, and i.

d *Cast alive.* See the note on chap. xx. 14. Dr. Clarke observes, it is only said of other sinners, *they were cast into the lake*; and this he supposes intimates a *distinction* of punishment, severe in *proportion* to the faults of the punished; and he thinks it illustrated [by the words of Moses, concerning Korah and his company, Numb. xvi. 29. *If these men die the the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me*; intimating, that there would be as much *difference* in their punishment, as between being executed in the common way, and swallowed up with an earthquake. *Clarke's Posth. Serm.* Vol. I. p. 400, 401.

thing. He will admit them all to *feast* in his own presence; yea, to dwell for ever with him; *so shall we ever be with the Lord.* *These are the true sayings of God.* And though a consciousness of our own utter unworthiness of such honours, might be ready to detract from the credibility of these Divine assurances, or at least prevent us from giving so clear an assent to them, as we might otherwise do, yet *let God be true, and every man a liar.* SECT. XXII. Ver. 9

And in the mean time, in the mingled scenes of adversity and prosperity, which attend the Israel of God, let us direct our believing eyes to him, *who is faithful and true;* to him, who both *administers justice,* and *wages war in righteousness.* Let us reverence his penetrating eyes, which are *like a flame of fire.* Let us rejoice in the *diadems* placed *upon his head,* to signify the extent of his dominion; and read with awe the inscription upon *his vesture, and his thigh, The word of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.* As such let us pay our homage to him; and let the favour of lords, and kings, be as nothing to us, where *his* favour or *his* honour is concerned. The proudest of earthly potentates oppose his dominion in vain; in vain do they marshal their *captains,* and their *mighty men;* vain is the strength of *horses,* and of *them that sit thereon,* and the combinations of *bond and free,* though Satan himself abet their rebellion, and inspire them with subtilty, and arm them with rage: their subtilty shall be defeated, their rage shall be repelled. *The sword of the Lord* shall devour them. *The birds of prey* shall at his pleasure be *feasted* with their *carcases;* and the sad catastrophe of their bodies shall be only an imperfect emblem of the anguish and misery of their spirits, when plunged with the *evil spirit that deceived them,* they sink deep *into the lake that burns for ever,* and feel the terrors of the *second death. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, and be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear;* and sensible of his uncontrolable dominion, and your own weakness and imperfection, even while ye rejoice before him, *rejoice with trembling.* (Psal. ii. 10, 10.) 11 12 13, 16 17, 21

SECT. XXIII.

The binding of Satan for a thousand years, during which the gospel is greatly to prevail; with a view of the destruction of the enemies of Christ, upon their making their last attempt against his church; and of the universal judgment. Rev. XX. *throughout.*

Rev. XX. 1. AND I saw an angel come down from heaven

REVELATION XX. 1.

THUS the beast was conquered and taken; but the dragon yet remained at liberty. *And* SECT. XXIII. Rev. XX. 1.

SECT. XXIII.

Rev. XX. 2. *And* that I might also be informed as to his doom, *I saw an angel descending from heaven, who had the key of the bottomless pit, and* he had also *a great chain in his hand: And he* advanced with the intrepidity of one who feared no resistance; and *laid hold on the dragon*, dreadful as he was; even *that old serpent who is* called *the devil*, from being the great false accuser; *and Satan*, as being the great adversary both of God and man; *and he bound him for the space of* 3 *a thousand years*[a]. *And*, having opened the door with the key that he bore, *he cast him into the abyss, and shut him* down, *and set a seal upon him*, to signify, that none should break open the door; *that he might not deceive the nations any more*, for the time above-mentioned, that is, *till a thousand years were accomplished, and then he must be loosed again for a little time*, and make his last effort against the cause of God, and the 4 kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. *And* after this, *I saw thrones* placed, *and they sate upon them, and* a power of *judgment was given to them; and the souls of them who had been beheaded*[b] *for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast nor his image*, when his cause was so triumphant, *and* who bravely opposed the torrent of prevailing degeneracy, so that they *had not received his mark in their foreheads, and upon their hands*, when it was so furiously urged upon all; these appeared to rise in triumph, *and they*

heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with

a *A thousand years.*] I think we must despair of being able to interpret *any passage of scripture* upon the plainest principle of reason, if this does not signify, that there shall be such *a period* as this, in which Satan shall be remarkably restrained, and the Christian interest shall prevail. But whether *the thousand years* are here to be taken literally, as is most probable, or whether here, or elsewhere, *each day* is put for *a year*, and consequently, the whole period be 360,000 *years*, I will not pretend to determine. This thought has been very lately started by an *ingenious and worthy person*, who hath, I doubt not, intended the service of Christianity; though I am very apprehensive, he has failed in some of the mediums by which he has endeavoured to prove this point. See Dr. Whitby's Treatise on the Millennium, where he shows at large, that this whole passage is *figurative*, agreeable to the prophetic style, especially in this book. And verse 4, may only intimate, that the *spirits* of the martyrs seem to live again, in those whom God should then raise up, Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 14, Rev. xi. 11, 12; Rom. xi. 15. This interpretation is illustrated and confirmed also by Mr. Lowman. So that the seventh *chiliad*, or 1000 years, from the creation of the world, is to be a kind of Sabbath. Compare *Ainsworth* on Gen. i. 31, and *Worthington on Redemption*, p. 211, 213.

b *The souls of them who had been beheaded.*] Dr. Whitby, not unjustly, thinks this a *strange expression*, to signify the resurrection of their *bodies*. (See his *Treatise on the Millenium*, chap. iii.) Mr. Fleming observes, it is said elsewhere, that their souls were actually living before; and *living*, he thinks, must be put for *rising from the dead*, because it is said, *the rest of the dead lived not till a thousand years*. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 57.

c *They*

with Christ a thousand years.

they lived and reigned with Christ [c], whose cause, during this time, was prosperous and flourishing, even for *a* whole *thousand years :*

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

But this was peculiar to this holy remnant : for, as to *the rest of the dead*, they *revived not till the thousand years were accomplished* [d] ; so that *this* [*was*] *the first resurrection.*

6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Eminently 6 *happy and holy* [*is*] *he, who has a part in the first resurrection* I have been describing ; it is a singular felicity and high token of the degree, in which God, the supreme Standard and Judge of moral rectitude and holiness, approves his character : *on such the second death*, we before described with so many dreadful circumstances, as the portion of the wicked, *shall have no* degree of *power* [e], nor shall any of its terrible forerunners, in the execution of Divine wrath upon his enemies ; *but they shall be the priests of God, and of Christ ; and they* shall not only be afterwards admitted to a kingdom of eternal glory, but *shall reign with him a thousand years*, partaking in the triumph of his kingdom upon earth.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

And when the thousand years, before 7 described, *shall be accomplished*, then *Satan shall*, for a certain time, *be loosed from his confinement*, to give the last proof of his malice against Christ and his saints.

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters

And he shall go 8 *forth to deceive the nations, who are in the four* distant *corners of the earth* [f], and shall prevail against

e *They lived and reigned with Christ*] This is the *chief text* on which Mr. Fleming builds his doctrine of *the first resurrection*; when, he supposes, those who have *died for the testimony of Jesus*, and other *most excellent* saints, shall be raised from the dead ; not, (he imagines,) to live upon earth, but to live a *thousand years* with Christ in heaven ; enjoying a blessedness nearly *approaching*, if not altogether *equal*, to that which good men are to enjoy after the *general resurrection* ; while the rest have only the common blessing of the separate state, during this period ; and, even after the resurrection, shall have only inferior degrees of glory, to what these first-fruits of the resurrection shall for ever possess. *Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 42.

d *The rest of the dead, &c.*] This has been urged to prove, that a *proper resurrection* is here spoken of ; but I much doubt the justness of the conclusion.—Such expressions may, sometimes, be thrown in to promote that *obscurity*, which seemed, upon the whole, convenient in such a series of prophecy. Compare chap. xxi. 17.

e *On such the second death shall have no power.*] Mr. Fleming considers this as an intimation, that *the second death* will have *some power to terrify*, though only for a little while, those good men, who shall not have their share in the *first resurrection.* See his *Christol.* Vol. II. p. 45. But the notion appears to me very absurd, and ill to agree with the representation which scripture gives of the universal judgment, as a day of unmingled joy and triumph to all the righteous.

f *The four corners of the earth.*] As it is most certainly known, from the most convincing arguments, and from repeated experience, that the earth is of a *spherical form*, it is certain, that by *the four corners of the earth*, we are to understand the nations which lay at the *greatest distance* from the *city of the saints* ; which, I suppose, does here especially signify Jerusalem. And we may suppose, that those who live

SECT. xxiii.

Rev. XX. 8.

against them, so that they shall engage in a vain and fatal enterprize, for the overthrow of what God has determined for ever to establish: even *Gog and Magog*, as the prophecy of Ezekiel, (chapters xxxviii, xxxix,) stiles the enemies of God's people: and Satan shall succeed in his attempts *to gather them together in war;* even an army, *whose number* [*is*] *like the sand of the sea.*

quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

9 Accordingly I beheld them in vision, as drawn forth in order of battle, *and* saw, that *they went up over the breadth of the earth;* so that they seemed to cover the face of it from north to south, *and* then *surrounded the camp of the saints, and* Jerusalem, *the beloved city*, in which they dwelt; *and* it seemed at first in imminent danger, but it was not long before it was remarkably delivered; for *fire came down from God out of heaven*, at once, *and devoured them;* so that there were no more remainders of them to be seen; but they, and all their dreadful artillery, perished and disappeared, as if they had never

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 existed. (Compare Ezek. xxxviii. 22.) *And* then *the devil, who had deceived them*, came in for his share of that punishment, which had long before been inflicted upon many of his accomplices, and *was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where*, as I before said, *the beast and the false prophet* [*were;*] *and* there *they shall be tormented* together *day and night, for ages of ages*, for ever and ever[g], without any hope of release or respite.

10 And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are* and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 *And*, after this, *I saw a great white* and resplendent *throne*[h], which shone with a glory scarce to be supported; *and* yet, mine eye being divinely strengthened for that purpose, I beheld *him who sate thereon, from whose* majestic *face*, when he came on this solemn and tremendous occasion, *earth and heaven fled away*[i], *and*

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

live in that situation, shall be last instructed in the gospel, and so capable of being most easily engaged to rise up against it. Compare chap. vii. 1. and paraphrase. By Gog and Magog, many understand the Scythians, and other *northern* nations, whom the devil will stir up to assault the people of God.

g *For ages of ages: εἰς τους αἰωνας των αἰωνων.*] This is the most *literal rendering* of these words; but it is certain that no argument can be drawn from hence against the eternity of future punishment, for no phrase can more strongly express a proper eternity than this.

h *A great white throne.*] It has been observed, that this judgment-seat has been represented by *a throne*, to show that there can be no *appeal* from it; *a white throne*, to signify the bright *glory* the unspotted *purity*, and inflexible *justice* of him who sits upon it.

i *From whose face earth and heaven fled away*, &c.] Mr. Blackwall compares this description with a celebrated passage in Homer, in which Jupiter is described as sitting on his throne, and asserts its great superiority, though its *plainness* renders the majesty less observable to com-

mon

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

and there was found no place for them, in which they might continue[k]. *And I saw the dead*, of all ranks and orders, *small and great*, rich and poor, princes and people, in one grand assembly, which knew no more of those distinctions, once so much regarded, *standing before God*, to receive their final doom from him; to intimate, that the last judgment should quickly follow the wonderful events which had been represented to me before. *And the books were opened*, which contained the records of the Divine omniscience on the one hand, and, on the other, the law and the gospel, which were the rule whereby those who stood before him were to be judged. *And another book was opened*, distinct from these, *which is* [*the book*] *of life*, in which were registered the names of all those happy persons, who, according to the tenor of the Divine declarations to men, should be the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and live with God for ever, in the enjoyment of felicity and glory. *And the dead were* all impartially *judged out of the things written in the books*, and in a manner agreeable to the tenor of them, *according to their works*, as they had been agreeable or disagreeable to the discoveries which God had made to them of his will for the rule of their actions. *And*, that none might be exempt from coming into judgment, I perceived that the resurrection extended also to *the sea*, which *gave up the dead that were in it*; *and death*, *and the unseen world*, and separate state, in all their extensive domains, *gave up the dead that were in them*, all that death had swallowed up, and Hades received; *and they were judged*, as I said before, *every one according to their works*. *And* I saw, in the vision, emblematical persons, who seemed to preside over the regions of *death and Hades*, or the separate state; and, to signify that human souls should be no more separated from the bodies, to

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake

mon readers: "It is so *plain*, says he, that it does not *need*, so majestic and grand, that it *exceeds*, *commentary* and *paraphrase*." See his *Sacred Class*. Vol. I. p. 329.

k *There was found no place for them.*] Hence Mr. Whiston infers, that at the consummation of all things, and the final judgment, *the earth* will desert its present station, and be no more found among the *planetary* chorus. *Whist. Theor.* p. 282. But I cannot think this description intended to teach any *astronomical* niceties; it seems only to intimate that *all nature* was thrown into *strong commotion*, as if it were incapable of sustaining the majestic presence that appeared.

SECT. XXIII.

to which they were now united, these persons, as it appeared, *were cast into the lake of fire*, which I have before described, and of which I said, that *this is the second death*[1]. *And* as the register, which God, in pursuance of his counsels of everlasting love, had kept of those, whom it was his gracious purpose, agreeable to the tenor of his gospel, to save, was complete, I saw, that *if any one were not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire:* so that this was the awful end of the whole human race, to be plunged into that flaming and eternal ruin, or to be received into those abodes of glory, which I am next to describe, under the figure of a new heaven, and a new earth. (Compare Rev. xxi. 1. note [2].)

Rev. XX. 15.

lake of fire; This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5 4 11 11, 12 13

We have here a most affecting view before us, of that *important event*, in which we are *all* so intimately concerned. Whatever *the first resurrection* may import, or that glorious *reign of a thousand years*, (which probably intimates a signal revival of the *Christian* cause in the world, and a display of its influence beyond what hath yet been known,) I say, whatever these events may particularly intend, *the illustrious day*, in which *heaven and earth is to pass away*, demands the attention of all mankind. For *the dead, both small and great*, whether buried *in the earth or the sea*, must then stand *before God:* Therefore let *all* the *living*, both *small and great*, seriously weigh the solemnity and importance of that appearance. Let them often look forward to the awful period, when the glorious *throne* shall be *set*, the important *volumes* opened, which contain the record of our lives and actions, and of God's gracious and merciful transactions with us. We must *be judged according to our works;* that God, before whom all our ways are, and who searches all our hearts, will *bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Let us *judge ourselves* impartially, that we be not *condemned of the Lord;* and

1 *Death and hades were cast into the lake of fire.*] It is no wonder a man of Mr. Hobbes's disposition and principles should be ready to catch at any argument, to prove the *annihilation of the wicked.* But, that which he insinuates from this passage, (see his *Leviathan*, p. 335,) seems to be very precarious. For, as Archbishop Dawes observes, (see his *Serm.* No. 7, p. 100,) to talk of *hell* being cast into *a part of itself*, is downright nonsense. The plain meaning is, there shall be *no more separate state.* And this, I think, clearly overthrows that hypothesis, which supposes this last *fire* will *kill* those that are thrown into it, and that their *separate* spirits will for ever remain in that misery, which must be the consequence of having lost happiness and hope, while they retain their thinking powers; a doctrine, which Dr. Whitby has strangely taught in his *Append.* to 2 Thess. chap i.

and conscious how unable we should be to *stand in that judgment*, if God were rigorous *to lay justice to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, let us humbly apply to the *throne of mercy*, to the blood of his Son, to the grace of his gospel-covenant. So shall we *find mercy of the Lord in that day*, and be the *priests of God, and of Christ*, and *reign with him*, not a thousand years alone, but *for everlasting ages.* SECT. XXIII. Ver. 6

In the mean time, let those who have no reverence for his majesty, who have no esteem for his gospel, who have never taken this awful alarm, who have never *fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them*, tremble at these awakening views. Let them all, of every condition, both small and great, say in their hearts, *Who shall dwell with devouring flames, and lie down in everlasting burnings*, even in this *lake of fire*, into which every one who is not *found written in the book of life*, shall be *cast*, and where the wretched victims of Divine justice *shall be tormented for ever and ever?* 15

How melancholy does the face of our earth appear, when we reflect on the *reign of Satan* on it, on the influence of *the dragon*, and *the beast*, and *the false prophet! O Lord*, cut short their power; send down the *angel that has the key of the bottomless pit, to bind* this destroyer; yea, when he shall be *loosed for a season*, moderate his rage; support thy saints under the terror of every assault, till thou appear to the last confusion of their enemies, till thou appear to close this perplexing scene, by the wise and glorious catastrophe of all things; when it shall be seen, that *the souls of them who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus*, were not lost, and that it was wisdom strenuously to refuse *the mark of the beast*, and the homage so generally paid to his *image*, though men might neither *buy nor sell*, nor enjoy their liberty, nor their lives, without making an entire submission to it. 1, 2, 3 — 7, 8 — 4, 5

SECT. XXIV.

The solemn introduction to the glorious vision of the new heaven and the new earth: with a declaration of the blessing to attend the faithful and courageous conqueror, and the misery to be inflicted on impious and wicked offenders. Rev. XXI. 1—8.

Rev. XXI. 1. AND I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;

REVELATION XXI. 1.

AND when this scene of things was passed away, another most glorious and delightful one opened upon me; for *I saw a new heaven, and a new earth*, wherein I knew righteousness was ever to dwell, *for the former heaven, and* SECT. XXIV. Rev. XXI. 1.

the

SECT. XXIV.

Rev. XXI. 1.

the former earth was passed away, as I said before; *and the sea was no more*[a]; the whole terraqueous globe was changed for another kind of world, wherein every thing was incomparably more beautiful and excellent than the face of nature had ever been, and room was made for a vastly greater number of inhabitants: *And* as an emblem of the eminent holiness and felicity which should there reign, *I John saw the holy city*, that is, *the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven*[b]; and it was *prepared* with all imaginable ornaments and decorations, *like a bride adorned for her husband*, and preparing to meet him with all her charms set out to the greatest advantage. *And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying* aloud, *Behold the tabernacle of* the living *God* [*is*] now *with men: and he shall pitch his tent among them*, in token of his favour and friendship, *and they shall be* owned by him as *his people, and God himself shall be*

1 way; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself

a *The sea was no more.*] The consequence which Dr. Thomas Burnet hath drawn from hence, in *his theory*, to prove there was *no sea* in the paradisaical state, is so manifestly absurd, that I need urge nothing against it. For it is certain, were God to cover the whole sea with dry land, the earth must quickly *perish*, as well as much of its commerce be destroyed. But a world more populous, than this can be, while the sea takes up so large a part of its surface, might well be expressed by such a *figurative vision*. As for this account of *the new heaven and the earth* in general *commentators*, have been divided. Some have thought it represents the happy state of the church upon earth, during the Millennium. A very *ingenious writer*, I mean, Mr. Worthington, in his *Treatise of the Extent and Progress of Redemption*, endeavours to prove that it is intended to represent a yet more perfect and durable period of prosperity, which shall be enjoyed upon this earth, *after* the Millennium; and when the *paradisaical state* shall be yet more fully restored, by the more abundant progressive influence of the gospel. But, on weighing the whole matter, I must declare myself of the opinion of those divines, who understand it as an *emblematical* description of the happiness which the saints are to enjoy *in heaven* after the resurrection, and to enjoy for ever; when, according to the preceeding descriptions, *the dead shall be judged according to their works*, when this *heaven and earth shall have passed away with a great noise, and the elements shall have melted with fervent heat*, as St. John and St. Peter concur to describe it; and when *death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, with all that are not written in the book of life: Phrases*, which, I think, cannot be explained properly of any event, but those of the day of *universal judgment*. And it is certain, that if we do not go into this interpretation of them, there is no view given us of the *final catastrophe* of things on this earth of ours, in this *comprehensive prophecy*, though intended to represent the triumph of Christianity; which seems *in theory* a very improbable supposition.

b *Descending from God out of heaven.*] I apprehend he saw in the vision *an appearance of a city*, which seemed, like *the sheet which Peter saw, to be let down from heaven*, and appeared *pendent*, as it were, *in the air*, in such a view, that the *foundations* were visibly distinguishable from the *superstructure*; and this he considered, not as actually the abode of the blessed, but as a *figurative* representation of the holiness and felicity in which they were to dwell; so that it was a *type* of what the *church* itself should be. To interpret it therefore, as if there were now *such a city made in heaven*, and by angelic power to be brought down to earth, and settled upon some spot of it, is so *wild*, and *romantic a thought*, that one would wonder any one person of learning and understanding should ever have embraced it. Compare *Hallett's Notes and Discourses*, Vol. I. p. 200. See Isa. liv. 11, 12.

c *He*

himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sate upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh

be with and *among them as their God*, their Protector and Friend, their Guardian and Father, their supreme Good and final Portion. *And God shall*, with parental tenderness, *wipe away their tears from their eyes;* though here their tears have plentifully flowed, not one shall now be left on any of their faces. *And death shall be no more;* he shall be for ever banished those blissful regions, and with him all his melancholy train, *nor* shall there be *grief, nor crying, nor shall there be any more pain*, or labour; *for* all *the former things are passed away*, all the mournful scenes which were on the earth so familiar to their eyes. *And he that sate upon the throne*[c] then spake himself, and *said* with his own awful and gracious voice, which through the whole vision I had not before heard, *Behold, I make all things new.* I exert my power in producing a new creation, whence every trace of seeming imperfection and irregularity shall be banished. *And he* then condescended to take notice of me; and singling me out by his eye, and directing his voice to me, he *said unto me*, while all my soul was awed into reverence and attention, *Write* what thou hearest, *for these are true and faithful words;* and as their contents are important, so they are beyond all controversy certain. *And he said unto me*, Wonderful as the prediction is, doubt not of its accomplishment; *It is done*, it is, as it were, already present with me; *I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the Beginning, and the End;* too great and excellent to need to use any artifice with my creatures; *and* far above the temptation of raising in them any false hopes and expectations, *I will give to him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely;* I open the springs, and they shall flow in abundance; and let every humble soul that desires it, freely come and quench his thirst. I have already made many gracious promises to him who overcometh; and I will now comprise them all in one; *the conqueror shall inherit all things;*

SECT. XXIV.

Rev. XXI. 4.

5

6

7

[c] *He that sate upon the throne.*] *As the Lamb*, and *He that sate upon the throne*, have been mentioned, as *distinct*, through the whole book, and as the Lamb is mentioned here as the *Spouse of the church*, I am ready to understand *the Father* as the Person here spoken of. But I will not absolutely insist upon this, because in chap. xx. 11, 12, it seems to be Christ who is represented as *sitting upon the throne*; since we know it is he who is to appear as *universal Judge*, under which character the Person who *sate upon the throne* is there spoken of.

SECT. XXIV.

Rev. XXI. 7.

things; the whole new creation shall be his, he shall possess its blessings to the utmost of his most enlarged desires. *And I will be to him a God,* a source of complete and everlasting blessedness; *and he shall be my son,* and as my son, inherit my kingdom, and dwell with me in it through eternal ages. *But as for the fearful and unbelieving,* who dare not face the difficulties which a courageous profession of my religion requires; *and the abominable,* who have devoted themselves to sensual affections and pursuits; *and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars*[d], all who allow themselves in their words, or in their actions, to violate the eternal and invariable law of truth by which I have governed myself, and by which I have required all my rational creatures to be governed; *their part* [*shall be*] *in the lake which burns* for ever *with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Let this therefore be recorded by thy pen, that every future generation of men may carefully peruse, and seriously consider it; that every sincere believer, however weak, may be encouraged, and that every obstinate sinner may be terrified, and, if possible, awakened; and that none, in the day of my final judgment, may complain, that they have not been warned and cautioned with the greatest plainness, and with the greatest solemnity.

eth shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 2 3 Let us pause a little, before we proceed to the more particular description of this glorious scene; and let our hearts rejoice in this general view of the *new heaven, and the new earth,* and of *the holy city descending out of heaven from God. Will God in very deed dwell with men?* Will he dwell with them for ever? Will he fix *his tabernacle* with them, and condescend to avow them for *his people,* and to make himself known unto them as *their God?*

Let our souls then be awakened, to pay a due attention to such glorious and important promises. Let us hearken to the voice 5 of him *who sitteth upon the throne,* whose *words* are undoubtedly *true*

[d] *All liars.*] Some think this refers to the general notion, which is so largely inculcated by the well-known author of *the religion of nature delineated,* that there is a *language in actions,* as well as words; and that the malignity of every vicious and immoral action, consists in its contradiction to the great *rule of truth.* But in this view, it must comprehend the case of *express lying*; against which, in the most obvious sense, the terrors of this clause are most *directly* levelled.

SECT. XXIV.

true and faithful. Lord, dost thou *make all things new?* Verify the word first, we implore thee, in our hearts, that it may be verified at length in our state and condition. O thou *Alpha and Omega*, who art *the Beginning and the End*, thou who hast done so much to introduce this Divine scheme of salvation, perfect it, we intreat thee with respect to us; exciting *our thirst* after the *water of life;* and may we come and take it as *freely* as it is offered in the gospel. Ver. 6

In what part of the holy scripture is *life and death, the blessing and the curse*, set before us, if not in these awful passages? Let those who are too timorous resolutely to adhere to their duty, be recovered, and as it were, driven back to it, by the fear of Divine vengeance. And let all habitual and obstinate sinners, and especially *all liars*, who bring up the rear of a *catalogue*, in which *murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators*, make a part, be awakened by this awful threatening. O desperate and inexcusable folly, to be afraid of the *displeasure of men*, and the inconveniences which may possibly attend an adherence to the truth, and not to fear *the lake which burns for ever with fire and brimstone.* 8

But let us courageously encounter, and then we shall conquer all our enemies, animated by these glorious promises, in which all the encouragements contained in the sacred volume, are comprised, that *he, who overcomes, shall inherit all things*, while God owns himself *his God*, and acknowledges him as *his son;* and *if a son, then an heir, an heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ;* and if so, *all things are indeed ours.* Let those tears, that will now sometimes silently steal down our cheeks, be shed as tears, which we expect quickly to have *wiped away*, even by the soft and compassionate *hand of our heavenly Father.* Let us bear our *sorrows*, and our *pains*, as those that know we shall, through Divine grace, soon be out of the reach of them; and let us meet *death* itself, if we are sincere believers *in Christ*, as those that know its *reign* will soon come to *a period;* and that when once we are recovered from it, by the almighty power of our great *General*, we shall never more be subject to its invasion, or any of its terrors; even then, *when all former things shall have passed away.* 7 4

SECT. XXV.

A sublime and particular description of the splendour, glory, purity, and happiness, of the heavenly Jerusalem. Rev. XXI. 9, *to the end.*

REVELATION XXI. 9.

SECT. XXV.

AND after he, who sat on the throne, had condescended to speak to me, in the words I have just now mentioned, *there came to me one*
Rev. XXI. 9. *of the seven angels who had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues* which had lately been poured out; *and he spake with me, saying, Come, and I will shew thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb,* and thou shalt observe how beautiful
10 and glorious she is. *And he brought me, in* a vision of *the spirit, to a great and high mountain, and he shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God;* which I understood to be an emblem of the church of Christ, in its most happy and
11 glorious state. And it was indeed a most delightful object to behold, *having the glory of God* shining round about it; *and its lustre* [*was*] *like to that of a most precious gem,* bright *as a jasper stone,* and *clear as crystal;* for the whole city, as it was represented to me pendent in the air, shone with an elegant and amazing lustre.
12 *And it* appeared *having a great and high wall,* for ever to secure it from all the attacks of its enemies; *having* also *twelve gates, and over the gates* there appeared *twelve angels,* as a celestial guard posted there; *and* there were *names written upon them, which were* [*the names*] *of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel*[a]; to signify that it was the dwelling of the Israel
13 of God. And the city made a complete square, having *on the east* side, which I first viewed, *three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates; and on the west, three gates.*
14 *And* as I saw the city suspended, as it were, in the air, I had an opportunity of observing, that *the*

Rev. XXI. 9.

AND there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates; and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south, three gates, and on the west, three gates.

14 And the wall of the

a *The twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.*] Such a regard continually maintained to the Jews, and their *manners*, and their *temple-worship*, might have a great tendency to conciliate their regards: and may also afford some *hints* for the interpretations of many passages of the Old Testament, in which expressions, taken from the Jewish church, are used in describing that of the Messiah.

b *Its*

SECT. XXV.

Rev. XXI. 14.

the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

the wall of the city had twelve foundations; and in them, the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were engraven; to signify, how great a dependence the church had on their testimony, and what an influence the gospel, which they preached, had upon raising this noble and Divine structure.

15 And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

And he that spake with me had, as the angel who appeared in vision to Ezekiel (chap. xl. 3,) a measuring rod, but with this circumstance of illustrious distinction, that it was *a golden reed;* and it was given him, *that he might measure the city, and its gates, and its wall.*

16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed; twelve thousand furlongs; the length, and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

And the city was a complete *square;* and *its length was* exactly *equal to its breadth; and he measured the city with the reed,* and each side was *twelve thousand* stadia, or *furlongs.* And, which was most extraordinary of all, it appeared to me, in this vision, as a perfect cube, so that *its length, and its breadth, and its heighth, were equal*[b]; which was an intimation how impossible it was for any of its enemies to scale the bulwarks that defended it.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

And he measured the thickness of *its wall,* and found it *one hundred forty-four cubits,* the square of twelve; and this was *according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel* who had the measuring-rod in his hand, and accurately took the dimensions of it.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the building of its wall was like a complete rock of *jasper, and the city* [*was*] *pure gold,* and it was bright and clear *like refined glass.*

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, a sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth an emerald;

And to signify how firm *the foundations of the walls of the city,* which were the emblems of the apostles and their doctrine, [*were*] they appeared, *adorned with every precious stone,* like so many vast and solid rocks of gems, lying under the gates, and appearing radiant and glorious, while the city hung, as I said before, suspended in my sight. *The first foundation* [*was*] *jasper; the second sapphire; the third chalcedony;* these were on the east side[c]; *the fourth emerald; the fifth sardonyx;*

20 The fifth, a sardonyx;

the

b *Its length, its breadth, and its heighth were equal.*] As this is quite inconceivable, with regard to any *cubical* structure, which can be supposed this bigness, I look upon it as a *wise* and *well-judged* intimation, that all these descriptions are *figurative.* The like intimation is given in the vision of Ezekiel; according to which, if it were able to be taken *literally* the building described must be *a mile high.*

c On the east side.] As the *temple of Jerusalem* was beheld in its greatest glory, when viewed from the *east,* towards which *the beautiful gate* looked, I think it is probable, that the like was observable in this *visionary* city, which was all as *one temple* in which *God dwells.*

d *Glory*

SECT. XXV.

Rev. XXI. 20.

the sixth sardius; these were on the north; *the seventh chrysolite*, or a stone of the colour of pure gold; *the eighth beryl; the ninth, topaz;* these were on the south; and, to complete the square, *the tenth* was *chrysoprasus*, or a beautiful mixture of gold and green; *the eleventh, hyacinth; and the twelfth, amethyst;* which appeared on the west side; thus were they agreeably variegated and decorated, with all the elegance and magnificence that can be imagined.

donyx; the sixth, a sardius; the seventh, a chrysolite; the eighth a beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 *And the twelve gates* [*were*] *twelve pearls; each of the gates was* of *one* entire undivided *pearl*, with all the beautiful pillars and arches mouldings and cornices. *And the street of the city*, instead of being paved with common stones, [*was*] *pure gold*, the substance being *transparent as glass*, and reflecting the light that shone upon it, with a lustre equal to that of polished

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 gold. *And* whereas the temple made so considerable a part of the view of Jerusalem, the holy city, which I had been used to visit; as for this heavenly Jerusalem, *I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it:* God was present in Christ his Son, by a more intimate presence than had ever been known upon earth, and by that presence, he made even the whole of the city most holy.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

23 *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine therein; for the glory of the Lord enlightened it*[d] on all sides, *and the Lamb was the light thereof*, and the illustrious manifestation of this presence rendered, not only ar-

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

24 tificial, but all natural light, unnecessary. *And the nations of the saved shall walk* continually *in its light;* happy nations, consisting of myriads and millions, shall expatiate in, and enjoy the delightful scene; *and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and their honour into it*[e]. If you were

24 And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

[d] *Glory of the Lord, &c.*] Some have thought, this was an *extraordinary lustre*, which seemed always to hover over it, like *a sun* never going down. I rather think, that *the whole city* appeared to him like a *luminous object*, sending out rays on every side, which he apprehended to be in consequence of *God's dwelling* there; and that these rays might have much of the lustre of the Shechinah. Mr. Fleming argues from this text, that the *Lamb* is the *Shechinah* in the heavenly world.

[e] *The kings of the earth.*] This is the clause upon which Mr. Worthington insists very much, to prove, that we are to understand this description, not of *the heavenly world*, but of some glorious state of the *Christian church*, which is to pass *upon earth;* and it must be acknowledged a *plausible* argument. The reader must consider, whether it is sufficient to outweigh those on the other side; and if it be not, I suppose he will find no solution *preferable* to that which I have here given; for I cannot suppose, that *the kings of the earth* are those who are to reign in *this new*

were to conceive all the monarchs upon earth, uniting all their treasures to adorn one single place, they could produce nothing comparable to what I then saw. *And the gates of it shall not be shut by day;* and that is equivalent to saying, they shall never be shut at all; *for there shall be no night there*[f]. *And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it;* whatever is most desirable among all nations, seemed to meet together, to adorn that place, where good men of all nations shall dwell and reign with God for ever. *And nothing unclean shall enter into it, nor* [*any thing which*] *practises abomination and falsehood* of any kind, *but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life*[g], in which none of such a detestable character can possibly have any place.

Rev. XXI. 25.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

26

27

IMPROVEMENT*.

GLORIOUS things are indeed spoken of thee, *O thou city of God.* (Psal. lxxxvii. 3.) Thus does the Divine Being condescend to aid our feeble faith, by such sensible representations. But none of these things which are spoken, can give us an idea grand and magnificent enough. The *pearls* and the *gems*, the *gold* and the *crystal*, the *honour of kings*, and *all the nations* they govern, all fall inconceivably short of that glory; for *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard*, nor, active and boundless as the human imagination may seem, *has it entered into the heart of man* to conceive,

Ver. 18, 21, 24, 26

new earth, whose glory shall be reflected from, and so adorn the blissful city which they shall then inhabit. (Compare Isa. lx. 3, 11, 20; lxvi. 12.)

f *There shall be no night there.*] Mr. Whiston supposes, that *a comet*, meeting *the earth at the conflagration*, (for to such a concurrence he ascribes that awful phenomenon,) shall give it such a blow, as to destroy its *diurnal motion*, leaving only such a degree of it, that, like *the moon* with respect to us, it shall move round its *axis*, while it performs its *periodical* revolution round the *central* body; and so as to turn always the same face towards it; so that *one* hemisphere shall be always enlightened by *the sun*, and the want of it in the other, shall be supplied by a *supernatural* light. But the *four dark corners*, (which where they are it is difficult to say) shall be the habitation of Gog and Magog. It is hard to determine whether this agrees less with the *description* here given, or the principles of good *philosophy*. See *Whist. Theory*, p. 447. But this is not a place to canvass such an *hyposhesis*, nor is it necessary, after what his antagonist Keil has said concerning it. This *gentleman* also, thinks a *comet* shall remove the *moon* from its *orbit*, so that it shall be converted into a *primary planet*, as he thinks it would have been *at the flood*, had it not been prevented by a peculiar providence.

g *But only those, &c.*] As it is certain, that *nothing profane, abominable, and false*, can here be considered as *written in the book of life*, this is another text to be added to the large catalogue I have given on John xvii. 12, where ει μη, is to be considered, not as an *exceptive*, but *adversitive particle*. See Vol. II. sect 179, note f.

* There are many beautiful ideas in the description, which I have not collected together in this *improvement*, as some of them have been taken notice of before, and some occur in *the next chapter*.

SECT. XXV.

ceive, *what God has prepared for them that love him*, in these regions of *perpetual day*, of everlasting security, in this *grand temple*, the whole of which shall be replenished with the most sensible tokens of his presence. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

Ver. 23

27 And *who shall abide in this thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in this thy holy hill?* They who are *written in the Lamb's book of life*, they whom God has, from the beginning, *chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, being predestinated to the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ unto himself.* And who are these? None that are *unclean* and *profane;* none that *work abomination* and *a lie;* but the pure and pious, the humble and the holy. Form us, *O Lord*, to this character by thy grace: and never let the gaudy glare of sensual enjoyments, and worldly possessions, turn our eyes from contemplating this glorious sight, or alienate our hearts from the pursuit of this blessedness; till, having heard of it by the hearing of the ear, and believing the faithful report, our eyes shall behold those *Divine substantial* glories, which these *emblems*, resplendent as they are, can but imperfectly represent. In the mean time, O Lord, lead us onwards through what *dark* and gloomy path thou pleasest, to these abodes of *light* and glory; determine for us in what *cottages* we shall lodge, though ever so mean and obscure, while we are pursuing our journey to this *royal*, this *imperial palace*.

3 6

SECT. XXVI.

The Apostle hath a further vision of the river of life, and of the tree of life; describes the happiness of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and receives a further message from God by an Angel, before whom he is about to renew his prostration; but is forbidden. XXII. 1—9.

REVELATION XXII. 1.

SECT. XXVI.

AND having given me this view of the holy city, *he*, that is, the angel who condescended to be my guide on this occasion, *shewed me the pure river of the water of life* which was *clear as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb;* an emblem of that perpetual life, and overflowing joy, which shall be the portion of all the blissful inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. And *in the midst of the street of it, and on the one side and the other of the river*, [*was*] *the tree of life*, (Gen. iii. 3, 22,) *producing*

Rev. XXII. 1.

2

REV. XXII. 1.

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river,

ver, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits *and* yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

ducing twelve different [*kinds of*] *fruits; every month producing one* [*kind of*] *fruit;* to signify the permanency and variety of those delights which spring up there. *And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations;* beneath their salutary shade no disease shall ever invade the nations of the saved, but perpetual health shall flourish among them: (Zech. xiv. 11.) And whereas in the earthly paradise Satan insinuated himself into the minds of the first parents of the human race, *and* the new-born glories of the creation were blasted by the curse which he introduced; in the heavenly paradise *every* fatal effect of the former *curse shall cease*[a], and no new evil shall ever arise; *and the throne of God, and the Lamb,* upon which the Father and the Son sit together, *shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him,* in the sacred offices of his temple, with far greater advantage than they have ever before done; *And they shall see his face* shine with unclouded lustre; *and,* in token of their perpetual devotedness to him, *his name* [*shall be borne*] *upon their foreheads*[b], as the name of God was on that golden plate which the Jewish high priest wore on his. *And* to complete their happiness, *there shall be no night there; and* so *they* can *have no need of a lamp, nor* indeed *of the light of the sun* itself, that glorious fountain of lustre to this lower world, *because the Lord God shall enlighten them* with the light of his own holiness and glory; *and they shall reign* as kings *for ever and ever,* and enjoy an immortal life, far more delightful, splendid, and magnificent, than any monarch on earth has ever known.

SECT. XXVI.

Rev. XXII. 2.

3 And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

3

4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

4

5 And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

5

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful

And when *he* had *said* this *to me,* he added, Though *these words* which I have spoken, betoken

6

a *Every curse shall cease.*] So the late *learned bishop of London,* I think very justly renders these words, which are plainly limited to the inhabitants of the *New Jerusalem,* and must certainly therefore, refer to the *final state* of happiness, after the resurrection; till which time all the saints of preceding ages will remain under *the power of death,* as to their *body,* and the effect of the first *curse* be written in their dust.

b *Names upon their foreheads.*] It hath elsewhere been observed, *sect.* xvi. *note* l, that there was a custom prevailing among many of the heathen, to inscribe on *the foreheads* the *names,* or *symbolical* marks, of the *deity* they worshipped; but the near connection between this clause, and that which related to their serving God in the *offices of devotion,* (for that λατρευω signifies) makes me think it more natural, to refer this to the inscription of *Holiness to Jehovah,* written on the *mitre* of the *high priest,* and so naturally leads us to reflect upon that intimate *approach* to the blessed God with which all these happy souls shall be honoured.

c *Has*

SECT. XXVI.

Rev. XXII. 6.

token such glorious things, that they may seem in a manner incredible, yet is not the divine bounty and munificence to be estimated by any human standard; they [*are*] therefore to be received, and depended upon, as *faithful and true.* *And* these things, O John, are intended, not merely for thy own instruction and consolation, and much less for the gratification of thy curiosity; but *the Lord God of the holy prophets has sent his angel*[c], *to shew to his servants, what must quickly be done*, and to represent scenes, which it shall not be long ere they begin to open,

7 though it may be long before they close. Yet, on the whole, I may in his name declare, *Behold, I come quickly* to call my servants to an account: and *blessed* [*is*] *he who keeps* and strictly observes, *the words of the prophecy of this book*; for they will in such a manner direct his course, as that he shall escape many dangerous rocks, on which multitudes shall suffer shipwreck, to their eternal ruin.

8 *And I John*, who wrote this book, am the person who *saw and heard these things; and when I heard and saw* [*them,*] I was so powerfully affected, that *I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed these things to me*, forgetting the manner in which the same kind of homage had lately been refused, upon a

9 like occasion. *And he* also *said to me*, as the angel had before done, (chap. xix. 10.) *See* [*thou do it*] *not, for I am a fellow-servant with thee*, I am subject to the same Lord, *and* share in the duty and service of *thy brethren the prophets, and* of *those who keep the words of this book*[d], which thou art now commanded to write: *worship God* alone, and divide not thy religious homage, between him and any creature, how exalted and excellent soever.

faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: Blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them.* And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

IMPROVE-

c *Has sent his angel.*] Perhaps the apostle might think *this angel* to be Christ, and that he speaks of his *own coming* in the following verse. But Dr. Calamy argues the *Deity of Christ*, from these words, which he thinks the context proves to be applicable to him. Compare ver. 16. *Cal. on Trin. Serm.* ii. p. 41.

d *Keep the words of this book.*] There are indeed a multitude of things contained in *this book*, which are of such a nature, that whoever pays a *due regard* to them, must necessarily be a true Christian, and intitled to all the blessings and promises of the gospel.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. XXVI.

WE will not now employ our time in reviewing the *infirmity* of this *holy apostle*, who seems again to have fallen into the same danger of *idolatry* from which he had so lately been recovered. Nor will we stay to examine, whether he took *this angel* for *our Lord Jesus Christ*, as some have imagined; or to determine *what homage* it was he attempted to pay. Let us content ourselves, for the present, with reflecting, how necessary it is we should be on our guard, against *exceeding* in our esteem and affection for creatures who have been the means of conveying to us signal advantages, and especially assisting our views of *the New Jerusalem:* —To the contemplation of which, may we now return with new and growing delight. Ver. 8, 9

Let us raise our eyes to *the water of life, which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb: to the tree of life, which grows* on its banks, and produces such a *variety of fruit*, both *for food* and refreshment, and *for the healing of the nations;* to that more excellent *paradise*, in which *there shall be no curse*, where, from *the throne of God and of the Lamb*, shall be scattered ten thousand blessings, on all his *servants;* who shall there *serve him*, with everlasting, with increasing delight, being admitted to *see his face*, and exulting in their having *the name of God written upon their foreheads;* which they reckon a brighter and nobler ornament, than the most glorious crown, or diadem, without such an inscription, could be. *These are the words of truth and faithfulness*; and as such, may our faith embrace them and our souls ever rest upon them. 1, 2 3 4 6

O that we may feel our *thirst* after *this water of life*, our *hunger* after *this fruit of the tree of life*, more powerfully excited. We shall, in both respects, be satisfied in the proper season; and, in the mean time, God will send us some refreshments, during our continuance in the *wilderness*. Already are we, if we are true believers, delivered from *the curse;* and those things, which were the original effects and consequences of it, shall be overruled by our gracious God, and converted into a blessing. And O, may Divine love, and every genuine regard to *God* and to the *Lamb*, prevail and govern in our hearts; and may our *lives* be devoted to that service, in which we hope our eternity will be employed. Have we not already, as it were, received *the mark of God in our foreheads?* Have we not solemnly enlisted ourselves to fight under the *banner of Christ?* Have we not, in repeated and most affecting solemnities and ordinances of his own institu- 3

SECT. XXVI.

tion, declared our desire of being for ever devoted to him? O let us ever remember the sacred engagement. Let *holiness to the Lord* be written on our *hearts*, as well as on our *foreheads*. Let all our affections, and all our faculties, all our possessions, and all our pursuits, be *consecrated* to God. To bear *this name* and inscription, will now, even in this dark and benighted world, shed a glory around us. It will be as a sacred guide to our ways, it will chear and animate our hearts, it will bring down to us many a delightful foretaste of that world, where, *in his light, we shall see light*, and where we shall *reign with him for ever and ever. Amen.*

Ver. 3

SECT. XXVII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ admonishes the Apostle, to discover to the churches what had been revealed to him; and solemnly declares his speedy approach, to fix the eternal state of men according to their characters and works. Rev. XXII. 10—15.

REVELATION XXII. 10.

SECT. XXVII.

AND he, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ[a], from whom I received this revelation, *said unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book*, so that they should not be immediately perused; *for the time is near*, in which the accomplishment of these things shall begin.

Rev. XXII. 10

11 Yea, the time is just approaching, when the last seal shall be set upon the characters of men, and when it shall be said on the one hand, *Let him that is unjust, be unjust still; and let him that is polluted, be polluted still;* for no more opportunities shall ever be granted for reforming what hath been amiss, and recovering the unrighteous and polluted soul to rectitude and purity. *And*, on the other hand, it shall be said, *Let him that is righteous, be righteous still; and let him that is holy, be holy still;* nothing shall ever happen to bring the virtues and graces of good men into any future danger, or under any cloud; but their righteousness and their holiness shall for ever shine; yea, shine with an encreasing lustre.

REV. XXII. 10.

AND he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

a *And he*, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ.] Many following words, and especially ver. 12, prove that our Lord is here meant. But it is a remarkable instance of the reference of a *relative* to a *remoter antecedent*, a figure of speech, which I have taken notice of upon many former occasions. Heb. vii. 2, note a.

b *Who*

SECT. XXVII.

Rev. XVII.

12 And behold, I come quickly and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his works shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

lustre. *And*, to confirm this, *Behold I come quickly;* I shall be manifest ere it be long; *and my reward* both of grace and vengeance, [*is*] *with me;* and *I will recompense to every man according as his works shall be*, whether it shall appear, on an impartial examination, to have been good or evil. And, to confirm it further, I repeat it again, *I am the Alpha, and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last;* and what I say may be depended upon as the words of invariable fidelity; Hear them therefore with attention and regard. And, since my nature and perfections are immutable, see that the necessary change be made in yourselves, in order to your obtaining that happiness of which your sins may now render you incapable. *Happy* [*are*] *they*, and they alone, *who do his commandments*, and so prepare for his important appearance; *that they may have the privilege* [*to eat*] *of the tree of life; and they shall* freely *enter by the gates into the* glorious *city*[b] I have described, and have their perpetual abode there. *But, without*, [*are*] the unclean, who merit no better a name than that of *dogs*, as they debase their rational faculties to the service of detestable lusts; *and sorcerers, and fornicators, and murderers, and idolaters*, who may justly be ranked together as the most abominable of sinners; *and* with them must be ranked too, *every one who loveth and maketh a lie*[c], who forges falsehood, and practises it, or acts in any allowed contradiction to the great eternal rule of truth and rectitude.

12 13 14 15

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Let us be very thankful, that *the words of this prophecy* are *not* *sealed* from us; but that truths, in which we have so important a concern, are so plainly published and proclaimed. *The time is near*, when a seal will be set on the characters of men: blessed be God,

Ver. 10

b *Who do his commandments, &c.*] This promise to all that *do his commandments*, that they shall *enter into the gate of the city*, here described, evidently proves it to refer to that state of *future* happiness which all good men shall finally enjoy. Compare ver. 18, 19.

c *Every one who loveth and maketh a lie.*] Though *idols* are called lies, yet as *idolaters* had been mentioned before as excluded out of this New Jerusalem, I think it most natural to understand this clause in the *sense* given in the *paraphrase*.

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God, he who is *now unrighteous and polluted*, may be purified and reformed, justified and saved. Adored be that grace, that waits so
11 long upon sinners! But the Divine long-suffering towards them
12 will have its period: yet a little while, and *Jesus* comes, to *render to every man according to his works.* May we then be fixed in a world of immutable holiness and happiness.

13 *The Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last*, has discovered to us many *evangelical* truths in this *mysterious* book. He hath directed our eyes *to the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood;* and hath shewed us the saints in glory, *laying down their crowns* in his presence and ascribing the praise of all the salvation to him; but he hath shewn us nothing that is inconsistent
14 with the necessity of real and universal holiness. Yea, he himself proclaims *them alone* to be entitled to *enter the gates of the New Jerusalem*, and to *eat of the fruit of the tree of life*, who *do God's commandments.* Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves with vain words, nor attend to any who would *sophisticate* the word of God, and fixing their view only on some detached passages of it, enervate by their unguarded interpretations, its general scope and meaning. Let us, in reviewing *scripture*, observe what God commands and requires, and compare it with what he forbids, that we may thereby impartially judge and try ourselves. And how free soever we may be from any of the grosser crimes here enumerated, such as *fornication, murder and idolatry*, let us not allow ourselves in the love and practice of any thing inconsistent with the *immutable rule*
15 *of righteousness and truth;* as well knowing every allowed and continued indulgence of that kind, to be utterly irreconcileable with a well-grounded hope of inheriting eternal life. May it please thee, *O Lord* to *inscribe* all these laws upon our hearts; that our joy, in the hope and prospect of the promised blessedness, may rise in proportion to our acquaintance with thy unerring word, and the impartiality and diligence with which we trace the actions of our lives, and the affections of our hearts, in comparison with it, and reduce them to a holy conformity to its precepts.

SECT. XXVIII.

Our Lord Jesus Christ repeats his august titles, and gracious invitation; warns us of the dreadful doom of him who shall add to, or take from his words; and declares his purpose of coming quickly; to which St. John adds his hearty assent, and concludes with his apostolical benediction. Rev. XXII. 16, *to the end.*

SECT. XXVIII.

Revelation XXII. 16.

Rev. XXII. 16

AND now to conclude the whole; be it known to every one, who reads these words,

Rev. XVII. 16.

I JESUS have sent mine angel to testify

fy unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning Star.

words, and let it be seriously considered by him, that *I Jesus* the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, *have sent* my beloved disciple and apostle John, as *my messenger, to testify these things to you, in the* several *churches* into whose hands this may come. And let it also be remembered, in order to add a due weight to the testimony, that *I am the Root and the Offspring of David*, by whose Divine power David himself was made, though as to my human nature, I have condescended to ally myself to him, and be born from his house: I am *the bright and the morning Star*, who wear a glory exceeding that of the most brilliant celestial luminary, and usher in a glorious and eternal day. And the great substance and design of the message is, to awaken in the minds of all to whom it comes, an earnest desire of those blessings which from this throne of my glory I am to dispense. *And* accordingly I do now anew publish the invitation: *the Spirit* with which I inspire my servants, *and the bride*, the church to whom I am espoused, concur to *say, Come; and let him*, even every one *that heareth, say, come.* Let every one echo the invitation, and let my people, in all ages, consider it as their duty to do it. *And let him that is thirsty, come; and whosoever will, let him* apply to me in my appointed way, and *receive of the waters of life freely*[a]: behold it flows in a full current from my throne; and if any man do not receive a part or share of it, without money, and without price, the fault is only chargeable upon himself.

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Rev. XXII. 16

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come, And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

17

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues

This important testimony I commission my servant to bear: *and I* also *testify to every one that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book If any man add unto these things, God shall add unto him*, and bring upon him, *the* most terrible of those *plagues which are written in this book*[b]: he

18

a *Whosoever will, let him receive, &c.*] Such a declaration of *free grace* seems to have been wisely inserted just in the *close* of the *sacred canon*, to encourage the hope of every humble soul, that is truly desirous of the blessings of the gospel; and to guard against those suspicions of Divine goodness which some have so unhappily abetted. The word λαμβανέτω, which we render *take* does often signify *receive*; and the word δωρεαν, is as much as *gratis*, which implies the *freedom* of the gift; and I think it may probably refer to that *celebrated invitation*, Isa. lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.*

b *If any man add to, &c.*] It is true this particularly refers to *the book of the Revelation*; but the parity of reason extending to other books, I doubt not the terror of the threatening does so too. God forbid we should imagine every *honestly mistaken*

SECT. XXVIII.

he will, by any designed addition to them, or corruption of them, make himself highly criminal, and eternally miserable. *And if any one*

Rev. XXII. 19 *take away from the words of the book of this prophecy*, with a design thereby to diminish in any degree, by the omission of what is disagreeable to him, or others whom he may desire to please and favour, *God will* severely punish such a sacrilege, and *take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and the* glorious *things*, even the invaluable blessings *which are written*, and described *in* the preceding passages of *this book* [c].

plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

20 *He who testifies these* important *things, says*, and leaves it as his parting warning with all that read them, *Surely I come quickly*. My soul, while I write it, replies, and let every reader reply with me from his heart, *Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus;* come surely, and quickly, as thou hast said; for all our highest and sublimest hopes depend upon the blessed and glorious day of thy appearance.

20 He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

21 In the mean time, let the churches to whom these messages are especially directed and inscribed, receive my most affectionate wishes, my most solemn benediction, which I express in this one ardent prayer: *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, even all the invaluable effects of his favour, and above all, the abundant communications of his Spirit, [*be*] *with you all*, and with all Christians, to whom these words may come, unto the end of the world. *Amen.*

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

IMPROVE-

taken criticism, where there is a question of receiving or excluding any *particular verse*, should affect a man's *salvation*, in consequence of what is here said. But I think such a passage should make men very cautious, that they may not rashly incur any censure on this account; though undoubtedly the terror of the threatning is planted against any *designed* erasement or addition. I shall conclude this note with declaring, that I have endeavoured to carry on my commentary on the sacred books with this thought in my view, and that I have neither designedly attempted to establish any thing, which did not appear to me to be a doctrine of scripture, nor drop any thing which did appear so. And whereinsoever, through human infirmity, and the want of a closer and more accurate attention, I have failed either way, I commit myself to the mercy of that Redeemer, whose word it is, and whose interest I have faithfully endeavoured to serve.

c *God will take away his part*, &c.] Since God threatens the *plagues written in this book*, and the loss of *a part in the holy city*, as what might be the portion of those who should presume to *corrupt it*, and such corruption might happen in any age of the church; I think it very evident, that *the holy city*, spoken of in the *preceding chapter* is a representation of the *heavenly state* to be enjoyed by all good men, how applicable soever it may seem to any glorious scene preceding the final judgment; and that Rev. xx. 11, &c. refers to the universal judgment.

IMPROVEMENT.

How sweetly and delightfully does the *canon of scripture* conclude, leaving as it were, the *music of heaven* upon the attentive ear. " O thou blessed *Root and Offspring of David*, O thou *bright and morning Star*, impress on all our hearts these thy gracious words, which thou hast condescended to speak from the *throne of thy glory;* thereby as it were, to aid the weakness of our faith, in those which thou didst deliver, while dwelling in mortal flesh." Then did the compassionate Saviour proclaim, from an eminence in the *temple*, to a crowded assembly on a day of peculiar solemnity, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:* (John vii. 17.) And now behold he makes the same proclamation from the *celestial temple;* he points, as it were, to the fountain-head of happiness, to *the springs of the water of life*, near the throne of God, and says, *Whoever will, let him come*, let him take, let him *freely take of this living water;* yea, and not content with speaking this language by *his Spirit* only, he calls on *his bride*, to lift up her melodious voice, to publish this kind invitation; he calls on *every one that hears it*, to echo it back, as if the excess of his goodness overcame him, as if it were necessary to *his own* happiness, that men should accept of *their own* salvation. SECT. XXVIII. Ver. 16 17

With what sacred observance should *these books* be guarded, which contain a message of such infinite importance! Of what dreadful *curses* are they worthy, who presume to *add* to what is already *perfect*, or to *take away* from that which is in every part *Divine*. I trust none of us shall ever *presumptuously* attempt to do it: and may we be preserved from those *mistaken* interpretations, in consequence of which, we should teach the world, as by his authority, any thing which he has not dictated, or deny any thing which carries along with it the stamp of such an authority. " Have pity, O Lord, upon our *weakness;* impute not *prejudices* which thou knowest we do not allow; and give us a greater *penetration of mind*, to understand the true sense of thy word; a *simplicity* of heart to receive it; an *integrity*, so far as the duty of our places requires, to declare it; and a *zeal* to inculcate and defend it." 18 19

And while we are thus employed, or employed in any *other* services which Providence has assigned us, in our respective stations and circumstances of life; whatever labours may exercise us, whatever difficulties may surround us, whatever sorrows may depress us, let us with pleasure hear our Lord proclaiming, *Behold, I come quickly*, I come to put a period to the labour and suffering of my servants; I come, and *my reward* of grace *is with me*, 20

to

SECT. XXVIII.

to recompence with royal bounty, *every work* of faith, and labour of love; I come to receive my faithful persevering people to myself, to dwell for ever in that blissful world, where the sacred volume, which contains the important discoveries of my will, shall be no more necessary; but knowledge, and holiness, and joy, shall be poured in upon their souls in a more immediate, in a nobler and more effectual manner. *Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.* Hasten the blessed hour to us, and to *all thy churches* as far as it may consist with thy wise and holy counsels. And, in the mean time, may thy *grace be with us*, to keep alive the remembrance of thy love, and the expectation of thy coming, in our hearts, and to animate us to a temper and conduct, which may suit the blessings we have already received, and the nobler felicity after which thou hast taught us to aspire. *Amen* and *amen.*

Ver. 20

THE END OF THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

AN INDEX

OF THE

GREEK WORDS AND PHRASES REFERRED TO IN THE NOTES OF THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

A.

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Ει τις αγαθος. Eph. 4. 29. note [p].

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αγαλλιασις. Luke 1. 14. [f].

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αγγελος. Acts 12. 15. [h].

αγγελος. Mat. 24. 31. [e].

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αχυρον. Mat. 3. 12. [k].

B.

βαπλιζεσθαι επι ονομαλι Χριςε. Acts 2. 38. [b].
βαρεις. Acts 20. 29. [l].
βαρυνθωσιν. Luke 21. 34. [c].
βασιλικος. John 4. 46. [d].
βαλες. Luke 16. 6. [b].
βατλολογησηλε. Mat. 6. 7. [h].
βεελζεβελ. Mat. 12. 24. [f].
βιαζεται, και βιαςαι. Mat. 11. 12. [f].
βλασφημενλες. Acts 13. 45. [b].
μηδεν βλαψαν αυλον. Luke 4. 35. [e].
βλεπων. Mat. 5. 28. [a].
βελειαι. 1 Cor. 12. 11. [i].
βοωνλων. Luke 18. 7. [c].
βραβειον. Phil. 3. 14. [m].
βραβευελω. Col. 3. 15. [d].
βεχειν. Luke 7. 38. [b].
βροσεως μιας. Heb. 12. 16. [c].
βροχον υμιν επιβαλω. 1 Cor. 7. 35. [b].
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βυθος. 2 Cor. 11. 25. [d].

Γ.

γελα υμας εποιησα, και ε βρωμα. 1 Cor. 3. 2. [c].
γαμεισθαι. Mat. 24. 38. [a].
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γαρ, *for.* Mat. 12. 8. [i].—Luke 6. 44. [c].—John 4. 44. [i]. 180. [c].
——*therefore.* 1 Cor. 11. 26. [h].
——*therefore,* or *so that.* Luke 20. 38. [g].
——*indeed.* Acts 19. 40. [q].—Gal. 1. 10. [k].
——*an expletive.* Luke 23. 22. [h].—Rom. 2. 25. [f].—Rom. 6. 19. [b].
——*a copulative.* 1 Cor. 15. 41. [d].
——*I say.* Gal. 4. 25. [a].
——*nevertheless.* 2 Cor. 12. 1. [a].
——*moreover.* Rom. 9. 17. [a].
——*now.* Rom. 8. 6. [a].—Rom. 4. 7. [f].—Gal. 2. 18. [d].
ο γεγονεν. John i. 4. [e].
γενεα. Acts 8. 33. [g].
η γενεα αυλη. Luke 21. 32. [h].
εις πασας τας γενεας τε αιωνος των αιωνων. Eph. 3. 21. [c].
γενεσθαι. John 8. 58. [g].
γενεσις. Mat. 1. 1. [a].
γενεσεων. Mat. 14. 6. [i].
γεννηλαι. Mat. 5. 18. [c].
γεννημαλα. Mat. 3. 7. [c].
γενομενης ημερας. Luke 4. 42. [f]. [a].
γενος. Mark 9. 29. [h].
τε γαρ και γενος εσμεν. Acts 17. 28. [q].
γευσασθαι. Acts 10. 10. [f].
γη. Luke 18. 8. [d].—Mat. 27. 45. [e].
εκ της γης εστι. John 3. 31. [f].
γινειαι, for εστι. Mark 4. 11. [h].
γινωσκειν. John 8. 43. [h].
γινωσκω. Rom. 7. 15. 1.—1 Cor. 2. 2. [b].
γλευκος. Acts 2. 13. [k].
γνωσεως της δοξης τε Θεε. 2 Cor. 4. 6. [f].

πηλικοις γραμμασι. Gal. 6. 11. [a].
γραμματευς. Acts 19. 35. [m].
γραφω. John 1. 45. [c].
γραφαις with αποστολοις. Acts 15. 23. [m].
γυμνασια. 1 Tim. 4. 8. [c].
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μετα γυναικος. John 4. 27. [a].

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δαιμονιον. Acts 17. 18. [f].
δαμαζεται. Jam. 3. 7. [g].
δανεισασθαι. Mat. 5. 42. [q].
δαπανη. Luke 14. 28. [c].
δαπανησασα. Mark 5. 26. [c].
δε. Luke 24. 12. [l].—Acts 19. 5. [b].
δεδικαιωται. Rom. 6. 7. [g].
δεησει. Phil. 4. 6. [d].
δεικνυσιν. John 5. 20. [f].
δεινως ενεχειν. Luke 11. 53. [m].
δειπνε γενομενε. John 13. 2. [a].
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δεισιδαιμονια. Acts 25. 19. [d].
δεξαμενος. Luke 22. 17. [d].
δευτεροπρωτον. Luke 6. 1. [b].
δεχομενος. Mat. 10. 41. [f].
δηναρια. Luke 7. 41. [c].
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δια, *by*. 2 Pet. 1. 3. [e].
δια δοξης. 2 Cor. 3. 11. [b].
δια πυρος. 1 Cor. 3. 15. [d].
δια τελε. John 7. 22. [f].—Mat. 23. 34. [f].—John 19. 11. [i].
δια τελε, *therefore*. Rom. v. 12. [b].
δια τε Ιεσε κοιμηθεντας. 1 Thess. 4. 14. [c].
διαβολος. John 6. 70. [f].
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διαγενομενε τε σαββατε. Mark 16. 1. [a].
τε διαθεμενε. Heb. 9. 16. [c].
διαθηκη. Luke 22. 20. [c].—Heb. 9. 15. [a].
διακονειν. Mat. 4. 11. [r].
διακονια. Rom. 12. 7. [g].
διακονια, η εις Ιερεσαλημ. Rom. 15. 31. [a].
διακονος. Mat. 20. 27. [h].
διακρινομεν. 1 Cor. 11. 31. [o].
διαλογισμοι οι κακοι. Mark 7. 21. [b].
διαλογισμοις. Rom. 1. 21. [k].
διαμαρτυρομαι. Acts 20. 21. [c].
διανοια. Eph. 4. 18. [b].
διανοιας. Luke 10. 27. 2. 85. [e].
διανοιγων. Acts 17. 3. [b].
διανοιων. Eph. 2. 3. [f].
διασειστε. Luke 3. 14. [h].
διασπασθη. Acts 23. 10. [i].
εις διαταγας αγγελων. Acts 7. 53. [m].
διαλιθεσθαι. Luke 22. 28. [a].
διαφερετε αυτων. Mat. 6. 26. [g].
διαφθορα. Acts 13. 34. [p].
διαχειρισασθαι. Acts 26. 21. [l].
διδακτον τε Θεε. John 6. 45. [c].
διδασκαλε. Luke 7. 40. [d].—463. [h].
διδασκαλος. Jam. 3. 1. [a].
διδασκοντες. Mat. 28. 19. [l].
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την διδασκων. Mat. 7. 29. [f].
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μακεδονια γαρ διερχομαι. 1 Cor. 16. 5. [c].
διεσαφησαν. Mat. 18. 31. [f].
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απο διετους. Mat. 2. 16. [g].
διηπορει. Luke 9. 7. [e].
δικαιος. Mat. 1. 19. [a].
δικαιον. Mat. 20. 4. [d].
τω δικαιω εκεινω. Mat. 27. 19. [e].
δικαιων. Luke 14. 14. [k].
δικαιωματα. Rev. 19. 8. [a].
δικαιοσυνην. Mat. 6. 1. [a].
δικαιωματα. Luke 1. 6. [a].
διχοτομησει. Luke 12. 46. [l].
διχοστασιαι. Gal. 5. 20. [d].
ε μη διψηση εις τον αιωνα. John 4. 14. [l].
ε μη διψηση πωποτε. John 6. 35. [i].
μετα διωγμων. Mark 10. 30. [l].
διωκετε. 1 Cor. 14. 1. [a].
δογμα. Col. 2. 14. [g].
δογματα. Acts 16. 4. [b].
δοκει εχειν. Luke 8. 18. [f].
δοκιμαζεις τα διαφεροντα. Rom. 2. 18. [b].
δοκιμαζετε. 2 Cor. 13. 5. [d].
δοκιμη. Rom. 5. 4. [d].
δοκον. Mat. 7. 3. [b].
δοκεντες αρχειν των εθνων. Mark 10. 42. [f].
δοκω δε κα' γω πνευμα Θεε εχειν. 1 Cor. 7. 40.
δοκω εχειν. 1 Cor. 7. 40. [l].
δωρεαν. Rev. 22. 17. [a].
δοξα εν υψιστοις, &c. Luke 2. 14. [l].
δοξαζομενος υπο παντων. Luke 4. 15. [b].

Δορκας. Acts 9. 36 [e].
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δȣναι μετανοιαν. Acts 5. 31 [d].
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τω δυναμενω. Acts 20. 32 [o].
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δυνασθε ακȣειν. John 8. 43 [h].
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εαν ελθω. 3 John, ver. 10 [h].
εαν υψωθω. John 12. 32. [h].
εαν μη. John 5. 19 [e]. Gal. 2. 16 [f].
εαν μη λαβη. Mark 10. 30 [l].
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καθ' εαυτον. Acts 28. 16 [n].
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προν εαυτȣς συζητȣντες. Mark 9. 10 [c].
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εβαςασεν. Mat. 8. 17. [d].
εβρασκανε. Gal. 3. 1 [a].
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εν τω εγγιζειν. Luke 18. 35 [a].
εγενετο. Luke 2. 46 [b].—Luke 17. 11 [h].—John 1. 17 [c].
εγενεθη. Acts 4. 4. [c].
εγεννησε. Mat. 1. 12 [i].
εγω ειμι. John 8. 24 [d].—John 8. 58 [h].
εδειγματισεν. Col. 2. 15 [h].
εδησεν. Mark 6. 17 [e].
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εθεασαμεθα. 1 John 1. 1 [a].
εθετο εν τω πνευματι. Acts 19. 21 [b].
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ȣκ ειασεν. Acts 28. 4 [d].
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ειγε, *since*. Eph. 3. 2 [b].—4. 21 [d].
εικη. Mat. 5. 22 [i].
εικονα. Heb. 10. 1 [a].
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ειπατε—οτι προαγει υμας. Mat. 28. 7 [f].
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ειπον αν υμιν, πορευομαι, &c. John 14. 2 [c].
εις εκ των δωδεκα. Mark 14. 20 [h].
εις, for εν. John 1. 18 [f].—Acts 8. 23 [f].
εις, *of*, or *concerning*: Acts 2. 25 [e].
εις, *upon*. John 20. 25 [b].
εις το, *as*. Heb. 11. 3 [d].
εις τον καιρον τον ενεςηκοτα. Heb. 9. 9 [e].
εις Θεον. Luke 12. 21 [d].
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εισηλθον. Luke 7. 45 [h].
ειτα, *now if*. Heb. 12. 9 [f].
εκ πιςεως, *by*. Rom. 1. 17 [c].—3. 30 [i].
εκ τȣ θηριȣ. Rev. 15. 2 [b].
εκβαλλη. Luke 10. 2 [c].
ȣ μη εκβαλω εξω. John 6. 37 [b].
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εκκακειν. 2 Cor. 4. 1 [a].
εκεινος. John 1. 8 [g].—John 5. 11 [i].
εκθαμβεισθαι. Mark 14. 33 [b].
εκκλησια, *assembly*. Acts 7. 38 [b].
εκλελυμενοι. Mat. 9. 36 [i].
εκρατησαν. Mark 9. 10 [k].
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εκτος ει μη. 1 Cor. 15. 2 [c].
εκτενως. 1 Pet. 1. 22 [d].
ελαλησα. John 18. 23 [b].
ελαφρον. Mat. 11. 30 [m].
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ελεγξει. John 16. 8 [c].
ελεγξον. Mat. 18. 15 [d].
ελεγχος. Heb. 11. 1 [b].
ελεημοσυνην. Mat. 6. 1 [a].
ελθȣσαι. Mark 16. 1 [e].
ελθων και ιδων. Luke 10. 32 [g].
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ελληνιςας, for ελληνας. Acts 11. 20 [b].
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ο εμβαπτομενος. Mark 14. 20 [h].
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εμπροσθεν με γεγονεν. John 1. 16 [b].
εμφυλον λοσον. Jam. 1. 21 [f].
εν, for εις. John 5. 4 [i].
εν Θεω ειργασμενα. John 3 21 [k].
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ενδειγμα. 2 Thess. 1. 5 [a].
ακ ενδεχεται. Luke 13. 33 [h].
ενδημενλες. 2 Cor. 5. 6 [f].
ενεικεν αυλω. Mark 6. 19 [g].
ε ενεκεν εχρισε με. Luke 4. 18 [f].
ενεπαιχθη. Mat. 2. 16 [e].
ενεργηματα δυναμεων. 1 Cor. 12. 10[g].
ενεργεμενη. James 5 16 [g].
ενεργονλας εν τοις υιοις της απειθειας. Eph. 2. 2 [d].
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εννυχον λιαν. Mark 1. 35 [f].
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τα ενονλα. Luke 11. 41 [c].
ενος εστι χρεια. Luke 10. 42 [f].
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το ενλος τε πολητε. Mat. 23. 26 [c].
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ενυγχανειν υπερ αγιων. Rom. 8. 27 [g].
εξαγοραζομαι. Eph. 5. 16 [a].
εξαπεστειλε. Luke 1. 53 [f].
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εξελθειν. Mark 9. 29 [h].
εξεμυκληριζον. Luke 16. 14 [h].
εξενευσεν. John 5. 13 [i].
εξεπλαγησαν. Luke 2. 48 [e].
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εξεσιαν. John 10. 18. [d].
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επεπεσεν. Acts 20. 10. [i].
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επισειον. Mat. 6. 11. [m].
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επισκεπλεσθαι. Jam. 1. 27. [m].
επισκηνωση. 2 Cor. 12. 9. [g].
επισπασθω. 1 Cor. 7. 18. [c].
επισαμενθ. Acts 26. 3. [b].
επισαλα. Luke 8. 45. [h].
επιστρεψαι καρδιας παλερων επι τεκνα. Luke 1. 17. [g].
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επλεονεκτησαμεν. 2 Cor. 7. 2. [a].
επνιγει. Mat. 8. 28. [e].
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επολισα. 1 Cor. 3. 2. [b].
εργαζεσθαι βρωσιν. John 6. 27. [a].
εργασιαν. Luke 12. 58. [g].
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στερεωσει. Acts 3. 16. [c].
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εσχατοι. 1 Cor. 4. 9. [b].
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το εσωθεν. Luke 11. 41. [c].
ετοιμασαι. Luke 12. 47. [o].
ετροποφορησεν. Acts 13. 18. [f].
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ευ. Mat. 25. 21. [b].
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ευδοκησα. Mat. 3. 17. [h].
ευδοκησεν. Luke 12. 32. [d].
ευδοκια. Luke 2. 14. [l].—2 Thess. 1. 11. [d].
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ευκαιρειν. Acts 17. 21. [h].
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ζωα. Rev. 4. 6. [c].
ζωγρεω. 2 Tim. 2. 26. [c].
ζυγην. Luke 5. 10. [f].
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H.

η, *or.* John i. 21.—Mark 6. 13. [f].
η, *indeed.* Mat. 7. 9. [c].
ηγαλλιασατο ενα ιδη την ημεραν την εμην. John 8. 56. [d].
ηγγικε. Luke 21. 8. [f].
ηγορασαν. Mark 16. 1. [c].
ο ηγεμενος του λογε. Acts 14. 12. [g].
ηγωνιζοντο. John 18. 36. [g].
εκ ηδειν οτι εστιν αρχιερευς. Acts 23. 5. [e].
ηδη, *even.* 1 Cor. 6. 7. [e].
ηκεσατε την οικονομιαν. Eph. 3. 2. [f].
ηκω. John 8. 42. [g].
ηλθον. Luke 24. 1. [e].
ηλικια, *age.* Mat. 6. 27. [h].
ηλικια, *stature.* Luke 2. 52. [h].
ημελλεν αυτον παραδιδοναι. John 6. 71. [g].
εν τη ημερα εκεινη. Mat. 13. 1 [a].—Mark 4. 35. [a].
εν ημεραις εκειναις. Mat. 3. 1. [e].—— Mat. 13. 1. [a].
ημερας γενομενης. Acts 16. 35. [a].
τας ημερας. Luke 9. 51. [b].
εν μια των ημερων. Mat. 13. 1. [a].
ην. John 1. 9. [g].
ην ωσει ετων τριακοντα αρχομενος. Luke 3. 23. [i].
ηξει. John 6. 37. [g].
ηρνησασθε. Acts 3. 13. [a].
εκ ηρνησατο. John 1. 20. [a].
ηρχοντο εις Καπερναουμ. John 6. 17.[a].
ηυλησατο. Acts 7. 46. [h].
συ αν ηιτησας αυτον. John 4. 10. [h].
ηυξανε και επληθυνετο. Acts 12. 24. [h].
καθως ηυπορειτο τις. Acts 11. 29. [h].

Θ.

θανατον ε μη θεωρηση εις τον αιωνα. John 8. 51. [c].

θεαθηναι. Mat. 6. 1. c.
θειοτης. Rom. 1. 20. g.
θελει σε αποκτειναι. Luke 13. 31. f.
το θελειν. 2 Cor. 8. 10. d.
θελετε ποιειν. John 8. 44. k.
θελη το θελημα αυτε ποιειν. John 7. 17. b.
θεληματα. Eph. 2. 3. f.
θελοντα δανεισασθαι μη αποστραφης. Mat. 5. 42. q.
θελω. John 1. 43. a.
θελων. Col. 2. 18. k.
Θεος. John 1. 1. b.
τα προς τον Θεον. Rom. 15. 17. c.
Θεου. Acts 20. 28. k.
θεραπεια. Luke 12. 42. i.
θεραπευειν. Mat. 12. 10. b.
θεσθε εις τα ωτα υμων τους λογους τουτους. Luke 9. 44. b.
θεωρω. John 6. 40. i.
θερευσαι. Luke 11. 54. n.
θηριον. Acts 28. 4. c.
θλιψις. 2 Cor. 6. 4. b.
θρησκεια. Jam. i. 27. l.
θριαμβευοντι. 2 Cor. 2. 14. a.
θριξι. Luke 7. 38. c.
θυμος. Rom. 2. 9. e.
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θυσαι. Luke 15. 23. h.

I.

ιασασθαι τους συντετριμμενους. Luke 4. 18. c.
εις τα ιδια, και οι ιδιοι. John 1. 11 k.
ιδιον παιδα. John 5. 18. c.
ιδιον τοπον. Acts 1. 25. k.
ιδρως αυτε ωσει θρομβοι αιματος. Luke 22. 44. k.
ιδιωτης. 2 Cor. 11. 6. e.
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Ιησους ο Χριστος. Acts 9. 54. a.
το ικανον ποιησαι. Mark 15. 15. p.
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ιματιον. Mat. 5. 40. n.
ινα πληρωθη. John 12. 38. a.
ινατι. Mat. 27. 46. h.
ιος. Jam. 5. 3. a.
Ιουδαιων. John 11. 19. b.
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ισαγγελοι. Luke 20. 36. e.
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ισορησαι. Gal. i. 18. l.
ισχυος. Luke 10. 27. c.
ουκ ισχυω. Luke 16. 3. a.
Ιωσιας δε εγεννησε τον Ιωακειμ, &c. Mat. 1. 11. h.
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K.

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καθαρα και αμιαντος. Jam. 1. 27. k.
καθαρισμε αυτης. Luke 2. 22. a.
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καθεξης σοι γραψαι. Luke 1. 3. g.
καθιζειν. 1 Cor. 6. 4. c.
καθισαται. Jam. 4. 4. f.
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και, for η, *or*. Mat. 12. 37. c.——Mat. 12. 50. i.
και, *and yet*. Mark 9. 12. m.
και, *even*. Mat. 12. 8. k.—Mark 3. 19. h.—Mark 6. 4. f.—Acts 7. 5. e.
και, *though* or *nevertheless*, John 14. 30. g.—John 17. 25. e.
και, *who*. Luke 15. 15. b.
και, *redundant*. Mat. 15. 6. g.
και, *particularly*. Eph. 6. 19. i.
καιομενη. Luke 24. 32. l.
καιροι εθνων. Luke 21. 24. h.
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καλειν. 1 Cor. 10. 27. b.
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καρδια. Luke 10. 27. c.—Eph. 4. 18. b.
καρφος. Mat. 7. 3. b.
κατα, *understood*. Acts 10. 38. e.
κατα, *after the example of*. Rom. 15. 5. b.
—— *for*. Tit. 1. 1. a.
—— Θεον. Rom. 8. 27. g.
—— καιρον, *seasonably*. Rom. 5. 6. e.
κατα καιρον. John 5. 4. f.
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καλαλυσαι παρα τινι. Luke 19. 7. [d].
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καλεπιη 1 Pet. 5. 8. [h].
καλαπονηζεσθαι. Mat. 14. 30. [g].
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καλαρξηθη. Rom. 6. 6. [f].
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καλειδωλον. Acts 17. 16. [b].
καλεκειλο. Mark 1. 30. [f].
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καλενανλι, *like*. Rom. 4. 17. [c].
ε καλεναρκησα εδενος. 2 Cor. 11. 9. [f].
καλεργαζομαι. Rom. 7. 8. [d].
καλεκελε. 1 Cor. 15. 2. [b].
καληνε, κκφηφον. Acts 26. 10. [g].
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καληχηθης. Luke 1. 4. [i].
καλοπριζομενοι. 2 Cor. 3. 18. [e].
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καυσων. Luke 12. 55. [e].
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κοκκινην χλαμυδα. Mat. 27. 28. [r].
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κραλις. Luke 1. 3. [h].
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κυλλες. Mark 15. 31. [a].
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λαλρευω. Rev. 22. 3. [b].
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λογος. Luke 1. 2. [d].—John 1. 1. [a].
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οτι, *therefore*. Luke 7. 47. [k].
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ουκ αν, *not, by any means*. 1 Cor. 2. 8. [i].
ουκετι οψεσθε—υμεις παντες. Acts 20. 25. [f].
ουν, *and* or *now*. John 12. 17. [k].
ουν, *for*. Luke 11. 36. [i].
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AN INDEX

TO THE FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

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